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To assess the views of parents of children living in a new inner-city high school administrative district, a household survey was conducted by a team of 20 interviewers between November 1968 and February 1969. The interviewers used stratified random sampling procedures involving geographical distribution, race, and grade level of students living in the area in May 1968. Of the 751 parents surveyed, 84.4 percent were Negro. Findings of the survey are reported in nine sections, as follows: (1) Characteristics of parents surveyed, (2) general attitudes toward the schools, (3) student performance and achievement, (4) instructional materials and school facilities, (5) curriculum, (6) parents' involvement with the schools, (7) discipline and security, (8) discrimination and rejection in the schools, and (9) community involvement. A series of 54 tables indicates percentage responses to major categories for individual interview items related to each section of the report. A copy of the interview schedule is appended. A related document is EA 002 498. (JK)

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OVERBROOK CLUSTER PARENT SURVEY 1969.
A DETAILED REPORT

Project Director:
Jack Schwartz, Ph.D.
Research Associate

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

Administration Building
21st Street South of the Parkway
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

May 1969

Office of Research
and Evaluation

John L. Hayman, Jr.
Executive Director

Divison of Administrative
and Survey Research

Daniel R. Fascione
Director

Telephone
(215) 448-3781

Available from Office of Informational Services , Rm. 224
School District of Philadelphia
21st Street South of the Parkway
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

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FOREWORD

This survey of parental experiences, concerns and attitudes was designed to strengthen school-community communications and at the same time assess the views of the parents of public school children living in the area from which students are drawn to attend Overbrook High School - a large part of which has been designated a new but not yet operating administrative district. It is hoped the information contained in this report can help provide a sounder basis for arriving at the crucial decisions demanded in urban education today.

The need for this research was expressed during the summer and early fall of 1968 at a series of meetings attended by certain community leaders and by representatives of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, the later formed Overbrook Cluster Committee, and the School District. Presentations of the research findings have been scheduled for meetings of the School District's Decentralization Commission and the new administrative district's Interim Planning Committee, as well as for a group of community representatives and the Overbrook Cluster Committee.

The Office of Research and Evaluation wishes to express its sincere appreciation to those parents who were interviewed, and to the interviewers and staff whose dedication to the project made possible its successful completion. Also acknowledged is the support of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers and of the community groups and other individuals who have contributed their time and thought to this project.

Analysis of the findings, and the preparation of this detailed report and a summary brochure, have been the sole responsibility of the Division of Administrative and Survey Research. For those interested, the summary brochure can also be obtained from the School District's Office of Informational Services.

Daniel R. Fascione, Director
Administrative and Survey Research

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SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

General Attitudes Toward The Schools . . .

. . . Four out of ten parents felt the schools would become better during the next year, 15 percent felt they would become worse, and the rest said they would remain the same (42%), or expressed no opinion (3%). Among Caucasian, or White parents, more felt the schools will become worse (35%) rather than better (29%). Corresponding figures among Negro or Black parents were 14 and 41 percent. Parents of students in senior high school were inclined to be more pessimistic (22%) than parents of elementary school children (11%).

Involvement With The Schools . . .

. . . Better than six in ten (63%) said they had spoken with their child's teacher during the past year. Among the parents who had, almost nine in ten (88%) found the teacher helpful, while six percent found him not helpful.

. . . Nine out of ten parents (93%) were aware of their school's Home and School Association. However, about half (52%) of those aware (63% among parents of senior high school students) did not attend meetings during the preceeding academic year. Among the reasons most often mentioned for not attending were inconvenient hours of the meetings (43%) and the need for someone at home to care for children, the ill or the elderly (18%).

Students' Performance and Parents' Expectations . . .

. . . Four out of every ten parents expected their child to get more out of school than they had, with proportions of 43 and 28 percent among Black or Negro, and Caucasian or White parents, respectively. The proportion dissatisfied was higher among the parents of senior high school students (50%) than among the parents of elementary school children (34%). When asked to specify the ways in which the student should have gotten more out of school generally, about as many expressed the belief that students have not been taught enough and have been "pushed ahead" too fast (34%), as mentioned the student's apathy, and general responsibility (33%).

. . . Opinion was almost evenly divided on whether elementary students reading below the level for their grade should repeat the grade (52%), or be promoted to the next grade (45%).

. . . Approximately three-fourths of the parents felt their child's reading (69%), writing (77%), and arithmetic (76%) were as good as they should be for a child his or her age. Corresponding proportions of dissatisfaction were 29, 22, and 23 percent.

. . . Among those disappointed with their child's performance in these subject areas, the student's own apathy, lack of ability, and physical or emotional handicaps were more often felt to be responsible (by 51-69% of parents) than inadequate teachers, school facilities or curriculum (by 13-30%).

Classroom Space and Lunchroom Facilities . . .

. . . Just over half (53%) felt their child's classroom was overcrowded. Almost two-thirds (63%) of the general sample (76% among parents of high school students) felt their child's school was overcrowded.

. . . One-half of all parents surveyed, and 80% of parents of elementary school children, felt the schools did not provide enough lunchroom facilities.

Curriculum . . .

. . . Better than three-fourths (78%) felt not enough was being taught in school about African and Afro-American history. Among Caucasian, or White parents, just two in ten (19%) felt this way, compared with 81 percent among Negro, or Black parents.

. . . About half (52%) of the parents were aware their child had taken standardized tests in school. Among those aware of this, half felt their child performed as well as he should for his age, 12 percent disagreed, and 38 percent expressed no opinion.

Discipline and Security in School . . .

. . . Slightly more parents felt the schools had enough (44%) rather than not enough (31%) personnel to "properly supervise the students." More parents of senior high school students (37%) felt there were "not enough" such personnel than did parents of elementary school children (26%).

. . . Asked about discipline in the schools, half (53%) expressed support for discipline in general, with two in ten (18%) supporting some form of physical punishment; however, other parents felt discipline in general should be reduced (6%), and 11 percent oppose the use of physical punishment. Parents mentioning specific forms of discipline supported detention during recess or after school (11%), denial of privileges in school (6%), assignment of extra homework (5%), and expulsion (4%). One in ten (11%) supported whatever form of discipline the child's teachers felt was best.

. . . Fully eight in ten (80%) parents surveyed felt their child would be safe in school, while 15 percent feared he may get hurt. The latter view was more often found among parents of secondary school students (21%); 78% of Negro or Black parents of secondary school students felt their child would be safe compared to 48% of Caucasian or White parents of secondary school students.

Discrimination and Rejection . . .

. . . A minority of about one in ten (13%) said their children felt discriminated against or rejected in school. Among Caucasian, or White parents, the proportion was almost double (23%) than among Negro or Black parents (12%).

Community Involvement . . .

. . . When asked to name an organization in the community which would best represent them in dealing with the schools, fully 73 percent did not identify any. Of the remaining, the most often mentioned group was the Home and School Association (by 11 percent). The remaining parents mentioned twenty-six different organizations, with no single one mentioned by more than three percent.

. . . Support for the idea of local school committees, which would help make decisions about the schools in their own communities, was expressed by three times as many (70%) as rejected it (25%). Opinion was more closely divided among Caucasian, or White parents, where respective proportions were 56 and 42 percent (among Negro, or Black parents, 72 and 19 percent respectively).

. . . Those supporting this idea did so largely on the grounds that the local community better understood (40%) or was more interested in (22%), the schools, and some (12%) felt it was their right and duty as parents and citizens to be involved in the schools.

. . . Those rejecting the idea pointed to a lack of qualified parents to assume the required responsibilities (44%), and the fear that a lack of standardization (18%) and increased discriminatory practices (18%) would result. Some (12%) also explicitly referred to a fear that a teachers' strike such as the recent one in New York City might result if the idea were put into practice.

. . . Among those who felt local school committees were a good idea, one-fourth (26%) felt they should help make decisions about curriculum, and another one-fourth about all things or about things in general (24%). Reference was also made to help in decisions about facilities (18%), discipline (17%), busing (13%), and the student's after-school work (9%). Seven percent explicitly mentioned the hiring and firing of teachers, while three percent favored involvement in the hiring and firing of all school staff and two percent mentioned the hiring and firing of principals.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA
Office of Research and Evaluation

OVERBROOK CLUSTER PARENT SURVEY

Introduction

This survey of parental experiences, concerns, and attitudes regarding the public school system in Philadelphia is one of a series of recent research efforts by the Division of Administrative and Survey Research designed to strengthen school-community communications, and thus provide a sounder basis for arriving at the crucial decisions demanded in urban education today. In planning for increased community involvement and participation in school affairs, it is essential that parents as individuals be polled for their views, and the positions reflected considered carefully along with those stated by formally organized groups and community spokesmen. This type of activity, moreover, may serve to make the entire community better prepared to take full advantage of the developing opportunities and responsibilities in helping to provide a more relevant and more adequate education for all children.

The present research was designed to achieve a broadly representative assessment of views from a specified geographical area, through a systematic sampling of the parents of public school children in intensive household interviews. The need for such an assessment of community attitudes and experiences in the "feeder area" for Overbrook High School was inherent in the establishment by the Board of Education, through a resolution on April 22, 1968, of some kind of new administrative "district" in the area. This need was formally expressed during the summer and early fall of 1968 at a series of meetings attended by a number of community leaders and by representatives of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers and the later formed Overbrook Cluster Committee. In addition, the School District of Philadelphia was represented at various times by Dr. Mark R. Shedd, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Ralph Sloan, Assistant to the Superintendent; Dr. Joseph Lapchick, the then newly appointed District Superintendent for the area; Dr. John L. Hayman, Jr., Executive Director of the Office of Research and Evaluation, and Daniel R. Fascione, Director, and Dr. Jack Schwartz of the Division of Administrative and Survey Research. At these meetings, the specific concerns of the individuals and groups represented were discussed and translated into a Study Plan involving household interviews with the parents of public school children in the community.

The community was defined as the area of Philadelphia from which students are drawn to attend Overbrook High School. This area, known as the Overbrook High School "feeder area" is referred to throughout this detailed report as the "survey area." It is bounded by City Avenue from the Schuylkill River to Cobbs Creek, east on Cobbs Creek to Market Street, east on Market Street from 63rd to 57th Streets, north on 57th Street from Market to Vine Streets, east on Vine Street from 57th to 53rd and Brown Streets, east on Brown Street from 53rd Street to the Schuylkill River, and then the River north to City Avenue (see map on page 3).

The specific objectives of the research were to determine parents' awareness of, and attitudes toward, each of the following:

a. Quantity and quality of school facilities and staff;

b. Ratings of

    1) the student's ability,
    2) adequacy of the schools,
    3) adequacy of the teaching staffs,
    4) reading teachers, non-teaching assistants;

c. Relevancy of school books and curriculum to student's needs;

d. Communications with the school

    1) with teachers,
    2) with principals,
    3) through Home and School or other parents' meetings;

e. Students' personal safety in school;

f. Extent and nature of discipline;

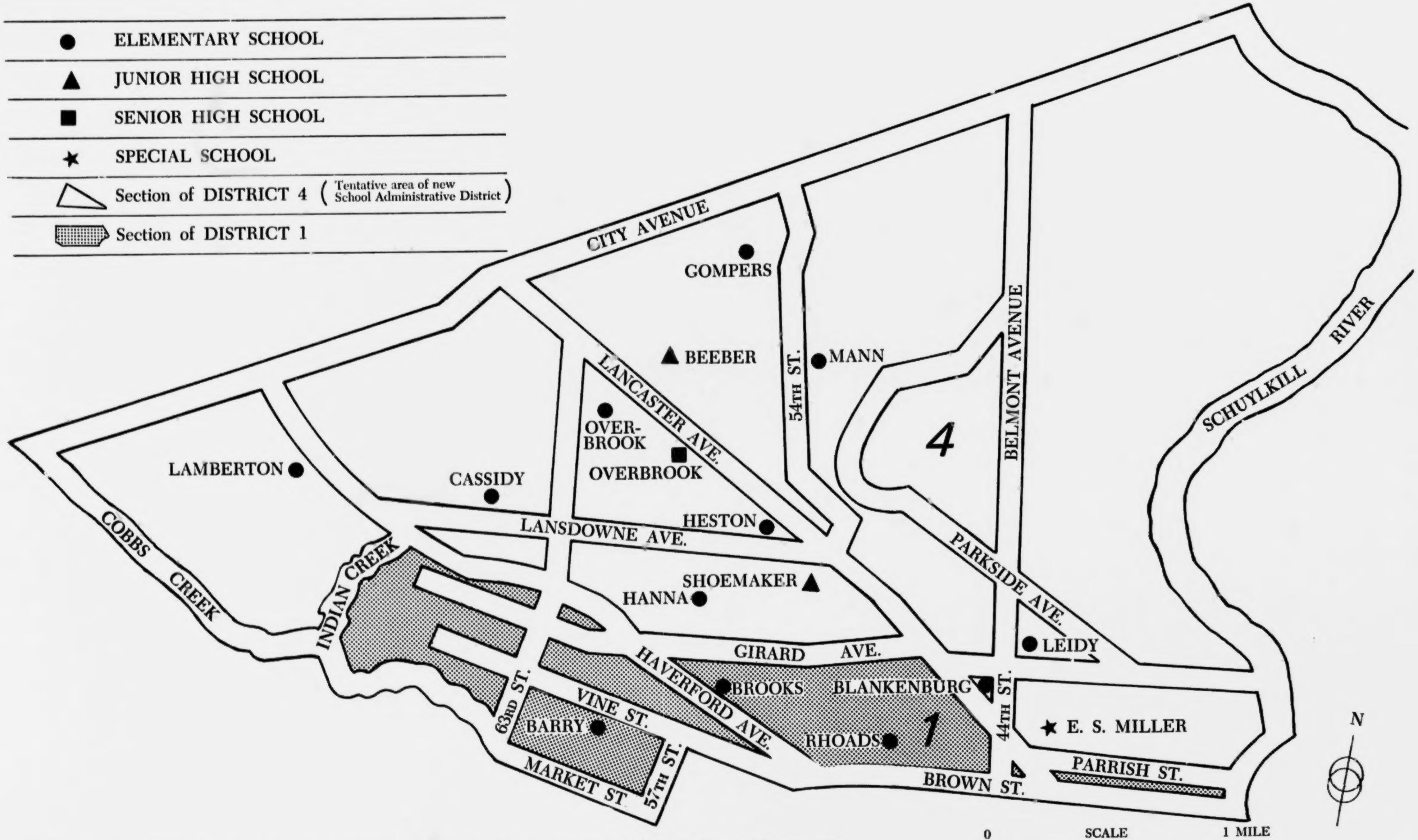
g. Conditions of overcrowding;

h. Discrimination against students and parents at school;

i. Lunchroom facilities at school;

j. Individuals or groups felt to represent parents best in communicating with the schools; and

SURVEY AREA | OVERBROOK CLUSTER PARENT SURVEY | 1969


● ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
▲ JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
■ SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
★ SPECIAL SCHOOL
Section of DISTRICT 4 (Tentative area of new School Administrative District)
Section of DISTRICT 1
CITY AVENUE
GOMPERS
BEEBER
MANN
54TH ST.
BELMONT AVENUE
4
SCHUYLKILL RIVER
LANCASTER AVE.
OVER-BROOK
OVERBROOK
LAMBERTON
CASSIDY
HESTON
LANSDOWNE AVE.
PARKSIDE AVE.
SHOEMAKER
HANNA
COBBS CREEK
INDIAN CREEK
GIRARD AVE.
LEIDY
HAVERFORD AVE.
BROOKS
BLANKENBURG
44TH ST.
E. S. MILLER
63RD ST.
VINE ST.
BARRY
RHOADS
1
PARRISH ST.
BROWN ST.
MARKET ST.
57TH ST.
N
0
SCALE
1 MILE

PREPARED BY THE DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND SURVEY RESEARCH —APRIL, 1969

k. A new administrative "district" for the community.

A proposal to authorize an expenditure of previously allocated research funds for the survey, and to accept a contribution from the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers of cash and staff time, was approved by the Board of Education on September 9, 1968. Within a few weeks, a series of meetings was held with representatives of local community organizations and other concerned individuals in the community to review the objectives and methods of the planned survey, and to assist in the development of an appropriate interview schedule.

Among those organizations invited to participate were the following; asterisks indicate that representatives attended a planning meeting on September 25, 1968.

Belmont Community Council of West Philadelphia
Carroll Park Community Improvement Association *
Citizens for Progress
Citizens League of West Philadelphia
Connestoga Community Betterment League *
Diversified Community Service *
Fairmount Park Civic Association
44th Ward Civic Organization *
Haddington Leadership Organization *
Merion Avenue Clean Block Club *
Ogden Civic Association
Overbrook Civic Association *
Overbrook Cluster Committee *
Overbrook Park Community Council
Self Help Advisory Committee *
Tri-Block Community Action Council
West Mill Creek Council
West Park Community League
West Philadelphia Schools Committee *
Wynnefield Residents Association

It is important to note that not all organizations and individuals involved in these early meetings agreed completely on the need for a survey or on the individual items to be included in an interview schedule. The survey was later received enthusiastically by the parents selected in the sample, however, with only three percent declining to be interviewed.

A temporary field office was rented within the community, and advertisements for interviewers were placed in city-wide as well as neighborhood newspapers. About half of the applicants applying for positions as interviewers were actually employed. In addition to the successful completion of a screening test and at least five practice interviews to measure the accuracy and thoroughness of the applicant in recording verbal interpersonal communication, the applicants had to be residents of the area, available to work a minimum of twenty hours a week, must have graduated from high school, and not have been otherwise employed by the School District at the time of the survey. Applicants were paid for four full days of training before being assigned practice interviews.

A team of twenty interviewers from the community were hired to conduct the personal interviews in the homes of parents. Two of the interviewers employed, however, had to terminate their services soon after the fieldwork began. Beginning on November 1, 1968, a total of 751 interviews were completed in the survey by February 10, 1969.

The following sections describe the methodology used in selecting the sample of respondents, the ways in which the final sample compares with known characteristics of the total public school population in the area, the training of interviewers, the administration of the fieldwork, and the statistical analysis of the findings.

Sampling

The sample was chosen to be representative of all parents, or guardians, of public school children enrolled in May 1968, and living within the school area. The parents of individual students were chosen using stratified random sampling procedures involving census tract, race, and grade level quotas in accordance with data contained in the May 1968 Pupil Directory. This Directory, prepared by the Division of Administrative and Survey Research of the Office of Research and Evaluation, lists the name, address, census tract and block location, school, grade, race, and sex of every student enrolled in the Philadelphia public schools. This represented the most up-to-date information about students available centrally at the time the survey was undertaken.

The purpose of the research was to survey parents of public school children living within the survey area, defined as the "feeder area" for Overbrook High School. A "feeder area" is that geographical area from which students are drawn to attend a particular school. Interviews were conducted with the parents, or guardians, of those students who had been enrolled in the Philadelphia public schools during May of 1968 and lived within the survey area. A single interview was conducted at each household. In the small number of instances where two students were selected from the same household, only one interview was conducted, with the parent being asked questions about only one of the two students whose names were selected.

According to the May 1968 Pupil Directory, 84.1 percent of the 23,919 public school students then living in the area were Negro, or Black. In the final survey of 751 parents, 84.4 percent were the parents of Negro, or Black, students. The grade level of the students in May 1968 showed 55.9 percent at Kindergarten through Grade 6, including those in special classes for retarded or handicapped children. In the final sample, 53.6 percent of the parents surveyed had children in these grades. Grades 7 through 9, and Grades 10 through 12 comprised 23.1 and 21.0 percent, respectively, of the students then living in the area; in the final sample of parents, 24.0 and 22.4 percent respectively had children at these grade levels. (See Table 1).

Table 1. PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS RESIDING IN SURVEY AREA, AND PARENTS INTERVIEWED IN SURVEY AREA, BY RACE, AND GRADE LEVEL OF STUDENT

	Percent of Students Living in Survey Area (5/68)	Percent of Parents Interviewed in Survey Area (11/68-2/69)
Race:	(N=23,919)	(N=751)
Negro or Black	84.1%	84.4%
Caucasian or White [a]	15.9	15.6
	100.0%	100.0%
Grade Level of Student in '67/'68: [b]		
Pre-School Through Grade 6 [c]	55.9%	53.6%
Grade 7 Through Grade 9	23.1	24.0
Grade 10 Through Grade 12	21.0	22.4
	100.0%	100.0%

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[a] Caucasian is used here to identify those students classified by their teachers as neither Negro nor Spanish-speaking. The Spanish-speaking students in the survey area constituted less than one-half of one percent of the students in the area, and none appeared in the sample of students' names selected or parents interviewed.

[b] Of course, many parents have more than one student in the public schools; however, each parent was interviewed with regard to a single specific student attending the public schools. The grade level refers to that of the student about whom the parent was interviewed.

[c] Includes special education classes.

In order to increase the efficiency of the sampling procedure, a technique known as "cluster sampling" was used. This technique enables the fieldwork to be conducted in a faster and less expensive way than strict random sampling without any loss in statistical validity. To do this, the survey area was first defined in terms of the census tracts which comprise it. A census tract is a geographical unit established by the U. S. Bureau of the Census to group conveniently individual city blocks, and much information about the student population, and the population as a whole in the area, is available for these units.

Then, each census tract was divided into the clusters of blocks comprising the tract; each cluster consisted of an average of three adjacent blocks. The census tracts in the survey area each contain an average of about eleven clusters. The selection of any single cluster within a census tract was executed on a random selection basis, with every cluster having an equal opportunity for selection in the final sample. The number of clusters of blocks selected within any census tract was proportionate to the number of students living within the census tract. In fact, 70 separate clusters were selected in the survey area from the 304 such clusters in the survey area.

Once a cluster was selected, the names of students living within it, and listed in the Pupil Directory, were selected with the first name chosen at random (using a table of random numbers) and every name thereafter drawn at regular intervals in the Directory, until the number of names needed in that census tract, and proportionately stratified by the known distribution of students in the census tract by race and grade, were obtained.

Once the name and address of a student was selected, an interview was then planned with his or her parent, or guardian. A letter was mailed to the parents of each student selected advising them of the purpose of the survey and to expect an interviewer, showing proper identification, to visit their residence within the coming weeks. In the letter, the parents were apprised of the confidentiality of their selection, and they were assured by the Director of the Division of Administrative and Survey Research that the information volunteered in the interview would be entirely confidental. No parent, student, or school staff member has been identified with any specific statement contained in this report. Furthermore, the "face sheets" of the interview schedules containing identifying information, were removed and placed in locked files before coding of the responses was begun.

Field Office

An office, vacant during weekdays, was rented for the duration of the fieldwork phase of the project (October of 1968 through January of 1969). This office, at 1701 N. Robinson Street, was located in a residential neighborhood centrally located in the survey area and was convenient to public transportation. While free space in local schools and churches was offered to the project, its use was rejected on the advice of those community representatives who attended the planning meetings. Their feeling was that use of school facilities might restrict interviewers and parents alike in their access to a field office, and that the use of any particular church might offend those residents belonging to different denominations.

Interviewing and Interviewers

The interviewers visited a total of 1,168 homes during the project. At 751 of these homes, or 65 percent, a satisfactory completed interview was obtained. The remaining visits did not result in completed interviews for the variety of reasons listed below.

Total homes visited by interviewers:		(1,168)
Respondent contacted and interviewed	751	65%
Person contacted but refused interview	38	3
Family moved, new address unknown, or outside survey area	123	10
No one home after three visits to home	115	10
Incorrect address	47	4
Vacant house	39	3
Address not a dwelling	12	1
Miscellaneous	43	4
	1,168	100%

It is significant that at only three percent of the homes visited did parents decline to be interviewed. In fact, interviewers consistently reported that respondents welcomed the opportunity to tell someone, particularly from the School District, about their experiences and attitudes toward the schools in their community and in the City generally.

A total of 20 persons were recruited as interviewers from among the 40 who applied. Two of the interviewers hired, however, left the project very shortly after it began. Eighteen resided in the survey area, while two lived within a half mile of it. The average age of the interviewers was 38, with the range stretching from 20 to 56 years. All but two were married, and the married interviewers had an average of two childreen. Eighteen were women, and two were men. Racially, 16 were Negro or Black, and four were Caucasian or White. In all but four cases, interviewers interviewed parents of the same race as themselves. These four interviews, comprising about one-half of one percent of the total completed interviews, resulted from errors in the racial classification of the student reported by teachers for the Pupil Directory.

Eleven interviewers had some previous interviewing or canvassing experience. Seven had completed high school, and the remaining 13 had formal training beyond high school. Occupationally, 13 were housewives, two did part-time secretarial or clerical work, two were college students, and one each listed their usual occupation as beautician, interviewer, and semi-retired corporation executive.

Interviewers were paid at the rate of $2.50 for each completed interview, $1.00 for each visit which did not result in a completed interview, and transportation. The per interview cost for interviewer payments was $5.13, and the interviews lasted an average of 42 minutes.

Each interviewer was given four full days of careful training before being assigned five practice interviews. At least 20 percent of each interviewer's work was verified by phone with the respondent.

Every effort has been taken to maintain the confidentiality of the information provided. Identification of parents and students was removed from the questionnaire as soon as each was received in the field office, and before coding and data processing were begun. Thus, no one involved with the coding and data processing, except the Fieldwork Supervisor and the Project Director, could possibly associate any response with a specific parent or student. No parent, student or school staff person has been identified with any particular response contained in this or other reports on the survey. We wish to thank all of the interviewers for their sincere interest in this project and their conscientious concern with recording accurate and complete information. The following individuals were responsible for obtaining all but a very few of the completed interviews:

Mrs. Ella Alston
Mrs. Theresa Arena
Mrs. Juanita Bell
Mrs. Edna Burgin
Mr. Stanley Cantor
Mrs. Pecola Gary
Mrs. Catherine Hammond
Mrs. Mary Hanks
Miss Gwen Jackson
Mr. Anthony Johnson
Mrs. Vilma Lester
Mrs. Josephine Lucas
Mrs. Linde Palmerio
Mrs. Elnora Purnell
Mrs. Otilia Robinson
Mrs. Geraldine Rogers
Mrs. Marian Soulds
Mrs. Bobbi Welsh

Coding and Tabulation

Editing and coding of the completed questionnaires were accomplished with the help of both paid employes and volunteers. Each coded questionnaire was checked by two persons, one of whom was either the Fieldwork Supervisor or the Project Director. The information on all questionnaires was transferred to IBM cards which were then tabulated on data processing equipment.

Purpose and Significance of This Research

This type of research is basically an attempt to measure and document the experiences and attitudes of the parents of public school children living within the survey area at a given point in time. It should be noted that to study and report experience and attitudes does not imply either support or condemnation. The information obtained can provide the School District and the community at large with a general framework for increasing their understanding of a variety of events, and within which to undertake new approaches in educational programs. This body of factual information, however, can not, in and of itself, provide definitive answers on what specific changes are to be made in the schools.

While the questionnaire was constructed to cover a wide range of interests concerning the schools, there are many areas of interest which of necessity had to be omitted. More detailed investigations of these specific areas in the future would undoubtedly be valuable. Inclusion of additional areas in this study, however, would have lengthened each interview to the point where fatigue would seriously interfere with the parent's fluency and thoroughness in describing conditions, and the interviewer's ability to record them accurately. The present interviews lasted an average of 42 minutes, which is generally considered an appropriate length for a household interview.

There are also many parents who, when being interviewed, try to judge from the questions what responses are expected, and what responses are "good answers." To overcome this difficulty, researchers attempt to construct questions in such a way that "correct" or "good" responses are neither explicitly mentioned nor implied. Each question in this survey was phrased to permit the parent to say whatever came to mind, or to give an equal opportunity for the parent to respond in either positive or negative ways to the subject being covered. Very explicit training and instruction were provided all interviewers that in research of this type there are no "right or wrong," "correct or incorrect" answers. All reactions to questions are important and meaningful in and of themselves, and should be recorded verbatim. Although some parents may have told the interviewer what the parent felt the interviewer and the School District "wanted" to hear, the many "negative" answers that are reported suggest that this potential problem has been minimized to a large extent.

Another potential problem in research of this kind is often introduced by differences in race, sex and/or socio-economic class between the interviewer and the responding parent. In the overwhelming majority of interviews, the interviewer was of the same sex (82%) and race (99.5%) as the parent interviewed. Although specific measures of socio-economic class were not taken, for either interviewer or responding parent, the fact that interviewers were drawn from the survey area tended to minimize such differences.

Some persons tend to be suspicious of strangers coming to their residence conducting surveys and asking questions about the people in the household. The occasional abuse of survey research techniques by salesman and others has tended to make residents increasingly wary of inviting strangers, identifying themselves as survey researchers, into their homes. In order to minimize this difficulty, the parents of each student selected in the sample were mailed a letter from the Director of the Division of Administrative and Survey Research of the School District advising them of the purpose of the survey, and to expect an interviewer to visit them soon. In addition, each interviewer carried an identification card signed by the Director of the Division and the Project Director. The fact that interviewers were refused admission into only three percent of the homes visited strongly suggests a high level of confidence and trust which parents felt toward the interviewers and the survey generally.

Finally, on the question of generalizability of the findings, because the present results are based upon a probability sample of the parents of public school children, results can be projected to all parents of public school children in the survey area, at the time of the survey, to within a 3.5 percent margin of error.

CHAPTER ONE

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS SURVEYED

Personal interviews were conducted with a total of 751 parents, or guardians, of students enrolled in the Philadelphia public schools as of May, 1968 and living in the "feeder area" for Overbrook High School. The interviews were initiated on November 1, 1968 and were completed on February 10, 1969. The interviews were completed at 751 different homes, or dwelling units, in the survey area.

Relationship to Student

In the great majority of interviews, the person interviewed was a parent of the student. A full 81 percent of the interviews were completed with the student's mother, and an additional six percent with the father. Interviews were also occasionally held with grandparents (6%), older siblings (2%), aunts or uncles (2%), and others (3%) when parents were not available; in these instances, the person interviewed was one identified in the home as most familiar with the students and their experiences with school. All respondents will be referred to as parents for purposes of this report. (See Table 2)

Race

The racial composition of the parents surveyed reflects the racial composition of the public school students living in the survey area. A majority of 84 percent of the parents surveyed, as well as the students residing in the community, are Negro, or Black; this compares with 16 percent who are Caucasian, or White, or other racial groups. The proportion of Spanish-speaking students in the survey area is less than one-half of one percent, and no Spanish-speaking students appeared in the sample.

Table 2. Relationship of Person Interviewed to Selected Student

Relationship of Respondent to Student	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student[b] K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Mother, or Foster Mother	81%	82%	81%	83%	80%	81%
Father, or Foster Father	6	15[a]	5[a]	4	6	10
Grandparent	6	3	6	7	6	3
Other relative or friend	7	0	8	6	8	6
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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[a] These differences statistically significant at the .05 level.

[b] Throughout this report, all breakdowns by grade level of student refer to the grade placement of a selected student in the household at the time of the survey. For this reason, the combined total is slightly less than the total parents interviewed because some children had left the public schools during the intervening period. The K-6 category includes children in special education classes.

Grade Level of Student

Each parent surveyed was asked about the experiences of a specific child enrolled in public school in May, 1968. The grade level of these students closely reflected the grade level distribution of all public school students living in the survey area. About half (54%) were enrolled in elementary school from pre-school classes through Grade 6, and the remainder was divided almost evenly between those in junior high school (24%) and senior high school (22%). Students then enrolled in classes for retarded, handicapped, and other special students are here included in the category: Kindergarten through Grade 6. (See Table 3)

Table 3. Public School Students Residing in Survey Area, and Parents Interviewed in Survey Area, By Race, and Grade Level of Student

	Percent of Students Living in Survey Area	Percent of Parents Interviewed in Survey Area	By Grade Level of Student[b]		
			K-6	7-9	10-12
Dates	(5/68)	(11/68-2/69)	(5/68)		
Number of Parents	(23,919)	(751)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Race: Negro, or Black	84%	84%	86%	85%	81%
Caucasian, or White, and Other	16	16	14	15	19
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade Level of Student as of May, 1968					
Pre-School through Grade 6[a]	56%	54%			
Grades 7 through 9	23	24			
Grades 10 through 12	21	22			
	100%	100%			

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[a] Includes children enrolled in classes for retarded, handicapped, and special students.

[b] Grade level of a selected student in the household at time of survey, November 1, 1968 thru February 10, 1969.

Schools Attended

Parents were queried about a specific child in each interview. As of May, 1968, almost three-fourths (73%) of these students were enrolled in a District Four school, with an additional 22 percent enrolled in District One schools. The remaining five percent were enrolled in schools in Districts Two, Three, and Six. However, at the time of the interview, some students had graduated, or transferred to schools in other districts so that at the time of the interview with their parents, two thirds (67%) were in District Four schools, 20 percent were in District One schools, and six percent were in schools in other districts, with an additional seven percent having graduated or left the public schools for other reasons.

The students attended a large number of different schools within the area. At least two percent attended each of thirteen elementary schools, from five to seven percent attended each of three junior high schools. Of the senior high schools involved, four out of five attended Overbrook High School. See Table 4 for a list of the schools involved.

Other Public School Children in Home

There were an average of three children enrolled in the public schools at each home visited. Almost one-fourth (23%) of the parents surveyed had a single child in public school, three in ten (30%) had two children, another three in ten (31%) had three or four children in school, and the remaining parents (15%) had as many as five or more children in school. The Negro, or Black, parents interviewed had an average of about three children in public school compared with two children for the Caucasian, or White, parents. (See Table 5)

Table 4. Public Schools Where Specified Students Discussed in Interview With Parents Were Enrolled

	Percent of Interviews with Parents of Specified Student Enrolled at School Listed			
Public School	Enrolled at Date of Interview 11/68 - 1/69		Enrollment as Listed in Student Directory 5/68	
Number of Parents	(751)		(751)	
Elementary		46%		54%
Barry	4		4	
Belmont	2		2	
Blankenburg	3		4	
Brooks	2		3	
Cassidy	3		4	
Gompers	2		3	
Hanna	5		5	
Heston	3		3	
Lamberton	5		5	
Leidy	4		4	
Mann	3		4	
Miller	1		1	
Overbrook	2		3	
Rhoads	3		3	
Others	4		4	
Junior High		20		24
Beeber	7		8	
Shoemaker	7		8	
Sulzberger	5		6	
Others	1		2	
Senior High		25		22
Central	2		1	
Girls	1		1	
Overbrook	20		19	
West Philadelphia	1		1	
Others	1		1	
No longer attends because				
Graduated		4		-
Transferred, other reasons		3		-
		100%		100%
By District:				
Four	67%		73%	
One	20		22	
Others	6		5	
None	7		-	
	100%		100%	

Table 5. Number of Children per Household Attending Public School

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	By Grade Level of Student 7-9	By Grade Level of Student 10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
One	23%	36%[c]	20%[c]	19%	20%	26%
Two	30	41 [c]	29 [c]	31	28	34
Three	18	15	19	22	17	15
Four	13	6 [c]	14 [c]	12	16	12
Five and more	15	1 [c]	17 [c]	15	18	12
None [a]	1	1	1	1	1	1
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Average [b]	2.8	1.9	2.9	2.8	3.0	2.6

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[a] Includes parents whose child (or children) attended public schools in May, 1968 but no longer does.

[b] Counting "five plus" as six.

[c] Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

CHAPTER TWO

GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SCHOOLS

The predominant view, among those expressing their opinions, is that the schools have generally helped develop students' abilities, that the students have gotten as much as the parents expected out of school, and that the schools are generally improving. The proportion of parents supporting each of these views varies, and statistically significant differences on some issues were found between the parents of children of different grade levels and races.

Developing Students' Abilities

Parents with children in the Philadelphia public schools for at least three years were asked whether or not the schools helped develop the student's abilities. An overwhelming majority of 86 percent support the view that the schools have generally helped develop the student's abilities. About one in ten (11%) held the contrary view, with the remaining three percent expressing no opinion. A greater number (89%) of parents with children in the Philadelphia public schools from three to six years felt their child's abilities had been developed than parents with children in the schools from ten to twelve years (80%). There was no significant differences here between Negro or Black and Caucasian or White parents. (See Table 6).

Student Achievement and Parent Expectations

Although a bare majority (54%) of parents surveyed felt their children got as much out of school as they expected, a minority of four in ten (40%) felt their children should have gotten more out of school. The remainder, six percent, either expressed no opinion or felt their children got more out of school than they had expected.

Student achievement consistent with parental expectations was more often expressed by Caucasian, or White, parents than among the full sample of parents surveyed. Two-thirds (67%) of the Caucasian, or White, parents felt their children got as much as expected out of school rather than felt he should have gotten more (28%). Corresponding proportions among Negro or Black parents were 50 and 43 percent.

Table 6. Have the Philadelphia Public Schools Helped Develop Students' Abilities?

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Black or Black	By Years of Child in Philadelphia Public Schools 3-6	7-9	10 thru 12
Number of Parents	(654)	(105)	(549)	(255)	(181)	(184)
Yes	86%	84%	86%	89%[a]	85%	80%[a]
No	11	13	11	8	12	16
Don't know, no answer	3	3	3	3	3	4
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Questions asked about students attending Philadelphia public schools for three or more years. Question phrased: "Looking back over (student's) years in the Philadelphia public schools, would you say the schools have generally helped (him/her) to develop (his/her) ability, or not?"

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[a] Differences between K-6 and 10-12 statistically significant at .05 level.

Results strongly indicate that the level of parental disappointment in the schools increases the longer a child is enrolled. Only a third (34%) of the parents of elementary school children expressed disappointment compared with one-half of the parents of high school children. (See Table 7).

When asked to describe the ways in which their children should have gotten more out of school, the parents queried more often placed the responsibility upon the students rather than either the teachers, school facilities, or the school system generally. Among those parents who expected their children to get more out of school, 28 percent explained their disappointment in terms of the students' lack of motivation or ability. These parents felt their children did not study or practice enough, that they were apathetic toward school and learning, and that they simply "didn't apply themselves."

One third (34%) felt that the school did not prepare the students well enough, either for the higher grades or for a job or college after graduation. These parents felt the schools generally "pushed" the children too rapidly through grades even though the students' performance may not have been satisfactory.

> "I thought he would be prepared to go out and get a job for one thing; he doesn't even have a trade."
>
> "It's in the elementary grades where the trouble starts. They don't teach the basics enough, and then he carries this poor background with him. He's just passed along from one grade to the next to get rid of him."
>
> "The system should give teachers more time to teach, instead of pushing the students ahead before they're ready."

Minorities placed responsibility for the students not getting as much out of school as they should upon inadequate or irrelevant curriculum (8%), not enough time in reading classes specifically (12%), and a poor quality and quantity of teachers (10%). There were no significant differences between parents of different races or between parents with children at different grade levels (See Table 8).

Table 7. Have the students gotten from school more or less than what was expected?

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Was expected to get more out of school	40%	28%[a]	43%[a]	34%[b]	42%	50%[b]
Got as much as expected out of school	54	67 [a]	50 [a]	61 [b]	49	45 [b]
Was expected to get less out of school	2	2	2	2	1	2
Parent did not know what to expect	4	3	5	3	7	3
Don't know, no answer	*	*	*	*	1	*
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Question phrased: "All things considered, did you expect (student) to get more out of (school) than (he/she) has gotten so far, or has (he/she) gotten out of (school) about what you expected?"

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[a] Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

[b] Differences between Grade Levels K-6 and 10-12 significant at .05 level.

* Less than one-half of one percent.

Table 8. "In What Way Should The Student Have Gotten More Out of School?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				1-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(304)	(33)	(272)	(117)	(68)	(97)
Students not prepared for job, or for higher education, pushed ahead	34%	36%	34%	31%	37%	29%
Students not motivated enough, lazy, neglectful, apathetic, to blame	28	30	28	25	29	33
Additional time needed in reading classes	12	10	12	16	13	8
Curriculum inappropriate, irrelevant	8	6	8	10	6	8
School staff not qualified, trained or dedicated	7	10	7	5	9	7
Students to blame (generally)	5	3	5	2	6	7
Additional time in learning to get along with others	4	3	4	3	9	1
School staff small in number	3	3	3	3	1	5
Students grades too low	3	3	3	3	4	2
Additional time in classes in other subjects	2	6	2	3	-	2
Parents responsible	1	-	1	3	-	-
Facilities inadequate	1	3	1	1	-	1
Other answers, vague answers	7	6	7	9	6	6

Note: Question asked of parents saying their children did not get out of school as much as was expected.

Totals exceeds 100 percent because some parents gave more than one answer.

The Future for the Schools

Looking to the immediate future, parents were asked whether, during the next year, the schools will become better, worse, or remain about the same. Better than two times as many felt the schools would become better (40%) rather than worse (15%); however, about four in ten (42%) expected no change.

Racial differences were especially marked in response to this question. Among Caucasian, or White, parents, more felt the schools would worsen (35%) rather than improve (29%) during the coming year; one-third (33%) anticipated no change. Likewise, the parents of senior high school students more often felt the schools would become worse (22%) than did the parents of elementary school children (11%). (See Table 9).

Table 9. "During the next year, will the school (student attends) become better, worse, or remain the same?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
No. of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
School will -						
Become better	40%	29%[a/]	41%[a/]	42%	35%	40%
Become worse	15	35 [a/]	12 [a/]	11 [b/]	15	22 [b/]
Remain about the same	42	33 [a/]	44 [a/]	44	47	36
No answer, don't know	3	3	3	3	3	2
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

[a/] Differences are statistically significant at .05 level.

[b/] Differences between the K-6 and 10-12 Grade Levels statistically significant at .05 level.

CHAPTER THREE

STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT

The great majority of parents surveyed -- seven in ten or better -- rate their children's general ability as at least average, and they also say their child's performance in the basic skills is generally satisfactory. When asked to cite the reasons for a student's poor performance, twice as many mentioned the student himself than referred to either the school, the teacher, or the child's home environment. Among those who were aware of standardized tests administered to students in the schools, about one-half expressed satisfaction with their child's performance.

When a student is reading below grade level, parents more often supported the view that the student should repeat the grade rather than be promoted. Although twice as many parents felt the schools taught enough, rather than not enough, about reading and writing, the majority with opinion felt there were not enough reading teachers in the schools.

Rating Student's Ability

Seven parents out of ten (70%) rated their child's general ability as "average," with an additional two in ten (19%) saying it was "above average." Barely one in ten (10%) considered their child's general ability as below average.

In order to further define the meaning of the words "average" and "ability," parents were next asked whether their child was performing in each of the three basic skills "as well as he should" for his age. Here again, there was general satisfaction with the student's level of performance. About seven parents in ten (69%) felt their child read as well as he should for his age, and three-fourths felt his performance was satisfactory in writing (77%) and arithmetic (76%). The minority expressing dissatisfaction with their child's performance were then asked why they felt the child was not performing as well as he should. A majority of the parents queried replied that the student was responsible for the poor performance -- either because of apathy, a lack of ability, excessive distractions, and so forth. Six out of ten parents asked this question responded in this way to the student's poor performance in reading, 71 percent for poor handwriting or writing composition, and 53 percent for poor computing skills.

> "She doesn't seem to concentrate enough on her work. I feel she could do better but she just doesn't try hard enough."
>
> "She doesn't read enough; doesn't know how to read for pleasure; she only reads what she was forced to read."
>
> "He can't spell like he should; he adds words he does not see."
>
> "His handriting is just too big and sloppy; he doen't pay attention enough to what he's doin'."
>
> "Math is just her weak subject; she can't seem to catch on."

The school and the teacher were to blame for three parents in ten asked about reading (28%) and arithmetic (30%) skills, and one in ten (13%) for handwriting or writing composition.

> "He should have had better reading courses in school"
>
> "He never got the fundamentals in the low grades. They just kept pushing him ahead when he couldn't really do the work."
>
> "She didn't have the proper training; it all goes back to (elementary) and (junior high school)."
>
> "Those new ways they teach things nowadays. It's all so different. He can't get it and I don't know how to help him."

Caucasian parents express a higher degree of satisfaction with their child's performance in the basic skills (86% each), than did the general sample (69 - 77%). (See Tables 10, 11, and 12).

Table 10. "Does the student read as well as a child his or her age should?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Yes	69%	86%[a]	66%[a]	67%	63%	76%
No	29	12 [a]	32 [a]	31	35	24
Uncertain, no response	2	2	2	2	2	-
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
If NO,"Why not?"						
Number saying "No"	(221)	(15)[b]	(206)	(106)	(57)	(46)
Student apathetic, lazy, plays too much	30%	(2)	31%	26%	33%	30%
Student has low ability	25	(3)	25	25	23	28
Student has physical, emotional handicap	5	(1)	5	8	4	2
TOTAL STUDENT FOCUSED REPLY	(60%)	(6)	(61%)	(59%)	(60%)	(60%)
School did not teach enough about reading (general)	12	(4)	10	9	14	13
Not enough book in class, or to take home	5	(-)	5	7	2	4
Not enough teachers	3	(1)	3	4	4	-
Books old, irrelevant	3	(-)	3	2	-	2
Poor teachers	3	(1)	3	-[c]	2[c]	15[c]
Poor teaching methods	2	(-)	2	3	4	2
Not enough assigned homework	1	(-)	1	1	4	-
TOTAL SCHOOL FOCUSED REPLY	(29%)	(6)	(27%)	(26%)	(30%)	(36%)
Parents lack of help	1	(-)	2	1	1	1
Don't know why	10	(3)	10	14	9	3
	100%	(15)	100%	100%	100%	100%

---

[a] Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

[b] Because of the small sample size - 15, the number and not percentage of parents responding is listed parenthetically.

[c] Differences between grades 10-12 and grades K-6 or 7-9 are statistically significant at .05 level.

Table 11. "Is the student's handwriting[a] (or writing composition) as good as it should be for a child of (the student's) age?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Yes	77%	86%[b]	76%[b]	78%	74%	80%
No	22	13 [b]	24 [b]	21	25	20
Uncertain, no response	1	1	*	1	1	-
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
If NO, "Why not?" Number saying "No"	(163)	(15)[c]	(152)	(72)	(41)	(39)
Student writes incorrectly, sloppily, has poor vocabulary	28%	(7)	26%	35%[d]	29%	18%[d]
Student apathetic, lazy, plays too much	28	(2)	28	26	32	21
Student has low ability	9	(-)	11	8	10	13
Student has physical, emotional handicap	4	(1)	4	4	7	3
TOTAL STUDENT FOCUSED REPLY	(69%)	(10)	(69%)	(73%)[e]	(78%)[e]	(55%)[e]
School did not teach enough about writing	10	(-)	10	10	7	13
Not enough teachers	1	(-)	1	3	2	-
Poor teachers	1	(-)	1	-	-	-
Poor teaching methods	1	(1)	1	-	-	-
TOTAL STUDENT FOCUSED REPLY	(13%)	(1)	(13%)	(13%)	(9%)	(13%)
Parents lack of help	1	(-)	1	1	1	1
Don't know why	17	(4)	17	13 [e]	12 [e]	31 [e]
	100%	(15)	100%	100%	100%	100%

---

[a] Handwriting used for referring to children in elementary school; writing composition for students in junior and senior high school.

[b] Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

[c] Because of the small sample size - 15, the number and not percentage of parents responding is listed parenthetically.

[d] Differences between grades K-6 and 10-12 statistically significant at .05 level.

[e] Differences between grades 10-12 and grades K-6 or 7-9 are statistically significant at .05 level.

Table 12. "Does the student perform arithmetic as well as a child his or her age should?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Yes	76%	86%[b]	74%[b]	80%	70%	72%
No	23	13 [b]	25 [b]	19	26	27
Uncertain, no response	1	1	1	1	4	1
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
If NO, "Why not?"						
Number saying "No"	(170)	(15)[a]	(158)	(65)	(42)	(52)
Student apathetic, lazy, plays too much	25%	(3)	26	17	29	31
Student has low ability	24	(2)	25	25	21	23
Student has physical, emotional handicap	2	(1)	1	2	2	2
TOTAL STUDENT FOCUSED REPLY	(51%)	(6)	(52%)	(44%)	(52%)	(56%)
School did not teach enough about arithmetic	12	(1)	13	12	10	15
"New math" confusing	7	(-)	8	8	7	10
Poor teachers	5	(1)	4	3	7	4
Teaching methods poor	4	(3)	3	5	7	2
Not enough teachers	2	(-)	2	2	5	-
TOTAL STUDENT FOCUSED REPLY	(30%)	(5)	(30%)	(30%)	(36%)	(31%)
Parent don't help enough	2	(-)	2	5	2	-
Other reasons	3	(1)	3	3	5	2
Don't know why	14	(3)	13	18	5	11
	100%	(15)	100%	100%	100%	100%

---

[a] Because of the small sample size - 15, the number and not percentage of parents responding is listed parenthetically.

[b] Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

Reasons for Student's Poor Performance

The interviewer followed upon these queries about the parent's individual child with a more general question regarding the explanations for a student's poor performance in general. "Generally speaking," the interviewer asked, "when a student is not reading or performing in school to the best of his ability, what would you say is the reason for this?" When the replies were grouped into those focusing upon the students themselves, teachers, schools, as well as parents, about half of those surveyed (53%) referred to the student being responsible for the poor performance. One-fourth each referred to the responsibility falling upon the schools, teachers, and parents (26% each). Only about one in ten replies noted that the responsibility was a joint one, shared by teachers, students, parents, and that there was a need for improved communications among the three groups. The percentage of replies exceeds one hundred because some parents gave more than one reply.

The most often mentioned explanations for poor performance which focused upon the student specifically were those made by three parents in ten (35%) that the student was apathetic, lazy, played too much, didn't practice enough, or didn't apply himself. This reply, was given by almost four times the number of parents who traced the cause to the students physical or emotional handicap (10%). About one parent in ten (9%) replied that the student simply had a low ability.

> "There's a lack of interest on his part. Laziness. Maybe a physical defect."
>
> "The child could be sick or nervous or confused or frightened. The child that does well is a happy child; he get's support from home. They encourage him."
>
> "The whole problem is that the children don't apply themselves. They've got the ability, but they just don't use it, they don't care."
>
> "All the kids nowadays are concerned with is having a good time."

When the responsibility for poor performance was explained in terms of the school, this was most often specifically in reference to overcrowding (9%), inadequate and irrelevant materials (6%), and the feeling that the school simply "pushed" students to higher grades though the students were not qualified for higher grades or graduation (4%). The criticism of teachers was most often focused upon the belief that the teachers were not interested or motivated in teaching children (11%), or a very general and undefined criticism of teachers (10%).

> "The teachers aren't interested in the slow child who needs extra attention; they're only interested in the A students."
>
> "I can't rightly blame the teacher because most teachers can't give enough individual attention -- the classes are too big."
>
> "Teachers don't seem to understand the child's welfare; she had a difficult time adjusting to school; they were impatient with her when she failed, after she had tried very hard; they don't show enough interest in the students; she went to the counselor but he just sided with the teacher and nothing is being done to help her."
>
> "Teachers can't teach properly in overcrowded conditions, and the children can't get individual help where it is needed most. A child will become bored when he can't get the help he needs, and he eventually gives up."

A significant minority of parents (26%) were inclined to place the responsibility for a students poor performance upon the parents themselves and the students home environment. One parent in six (16%) felt that a students poor performance could be explained by his parents being apathetic about his performance and not helping him at home, and 11 percent of the parents felt the explanation lay in a disruptive home environment for the student, wherein family problems, distractions from television, and even the lack of food contributed to poor performance in school.

> "So often the parents just ignore the child; don't give him enough help."
>
> "The houses are so noisy. The TV, or somebody quarreling. No wonder so many can't concentrate."
>
> "Parents should consult more with the teachers, so they know how to best help the child."
>
> "Sometimes it's the parents' fault."

Caucasian, or White, parents were less likely to provide this explanation (17%) than were the parents in the total survey (26%). Otherwise, there were no significant differences between Negro or Black, and Caucasian or White parents. (See Table 13).

Table 13. "Generally speaking, when a student is not reading or performing to the best of his ability, what is the reason for this?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Student apathetic, lazy, plays too much, doesn't practice or apply himself	35%	30%	35%	32%	39%	37%
Student has physical or emotional handicap	10	14	10	11	9	10
Student has low ability	9	8	9	11	7	7
Student dislikes teacher	2	2	2	1	2	2
TOTAL PARENTS WITH AT LEAST ONE STUDENT FOCUSED REPLY	(53%)	(49%)	(54%)	(52%)	(55%)	(55%)
School overcrowded	9	8	9	12	7	6
Materials inadequate, irrelevant, antiquated	6	5	6	7	2	6
School advances students too fast	4	5	4	4	6	7
Not enough special courses for slow students	3	6	2	3	2	3
Not enough class materials	2	1	2	3	2	*
Curriculum irrelevant	1	-	2	1	1	2
Other reasons re school	2	2	2	3	2	2
TOTAL PARENTS WITH AT LEAST ONE STUDENT FOCUSED REPLY	(26%)	(28%)	(25%)	(28%)	(21%)	(24%)
Teacher not interested in teaching	11	13	11	9	16	12
Poor teachers generally	10	12	9	8	12	11
Teachers disinterested, unqualified in course	2	2	2	1	4	3
Not enough homework graded or assigned	2	4	1	2	1	2
Other reasons re teacher	2	2	2	2	2	3
TOTAL PARENTS WITH AT LEAST ONE TEACHER FOCUSED REPLY	(26%)	(31%)	(25%)	(20%)	(32%)	(32%)
Parents don't care, help students enough	16	8	17	20	13	10
Home noisy, disruptive, insufficient food	11	9	11	13	11	8
Parents absent from home	1	2	1	1	1	-
TOTAL PARENTS WITH AT LEAST ONE PARENT FOCUSED REPLY	(26%)	(17%)[b]	(28%)[b]	(32%)	(25%)	(17%)

Table 13. (CONTINUED)

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Not enough communication . . .						
between teachers and parents	3	2	3	3	4	2
between students and parents	3	5	3	3	3	3
between students and teachers	2	1	2	1	2	3
Don't know, no answer	3	3	3	3	3	3

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because some parents gave more than one answer.

b/ Racial differences statistically significant at .05 level.

The Teaching, and Teachers, of Reading

A majority of two-thirds (66%) with opinions felt the schools taught enough about reading and writing, rather than not enough (34%). However, 60 percent with opinions felt the schools did not generally have enough teachers whose special job was to improve the students reading. (See Table 14).

Table 14. Adequacy of Staff and Curriculum for Reading

	Among Those Expressing Opinions				
	Number of Parents	Percent Enough	Percent Not Enough	Total	Percent of Total Surveyed Without Opinions (751)
"Have schools taught your child enough about reading and writing, or not?"	(718)	66%	34%	100%	4%
"Does the school have enough or not enough teachers whose special job is to improve the children's reading?"	(435)	40%	60%	100%	42%

The Poor Reader: To Advance or Repeat?

"Suppose an elementary student was reading below level for his grade," parents were asked, "is it better for the student to be promoted to the next highest grade, or should the student repeat the grade?" Results indicated a strong division of opinion with a bare majority (52%) opting for the student repeating the grade, however four percent made this conditional upon the student getting extra help in reading in the repeated grade. On the other hand, 45 percent felt the student should be advanced, but 35 percent made this recommendation conditional upon the student receiving extra help and attention in reading in the advanced grade. Only three percent of the parents queried expressed no opinion on this issue. (See Table 15).

Table 15. "Should an elementary student reading below grade level be promoted to the next highest grade, or should he repeat the grade?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Student should be promoted (unconditionally)	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	7%
Student should be promoted, but - with extra classes, attention in advanced grade	35	43	34	37	36	32
TOTAL FOR PROMOTION	(45%)	(53)	(44)	(47)	(46)	(39)
Student should repeat grade (unconditionally)	48	33 [a]	51 [a]	46	48	53
Student should repeat grade, but with extra classes, attention in repeated grade	4	11	2	4	3	6
TOTAL FOR REPETITION	(52%)	(44)	(53)	(50)	(51)	(59)
Don't know, qualified answer	3	3	3	3	3	2
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

---

[a] These differences statistically significant at .05 level.

Caucasian, or White, parents were more often inclined to favor promoting students (53%) than was the general sample (45%). The parents of senior high school students were more likely to favor repetition (59%) than promotion (39%), while the parents of elementary and junior high school students were more often divided on the issue (47 and 46 for promotion, 50 and 51 percent for repetition).

Testing

The publication of test score results of students in the Philadelphia public schools is often reacted to with considerable alarm from educators, interested parents, teachers, and school administrators. One of the objectives of the present research was to learn the extent of parents' awareness of these tests, and their satisfaction with the results. Our inquiries with parents indicated about half (52%) were aware that their child took a standardized test, such as the Iowa test or an "IQ" test, in school. Among those parents aware of the tests, four times as many parents (26%) expressed satisfaction rather than dissatisfaction (6%) with the results. (See Table 16).

Even though higher proportions of Caucasian, or White, parents (81%), and the parents of junior and senior high school (60% and 61%), were more aware of the tests, the relative proportion of satisfied parents within each group was not significantly different than the general sample.

Table 16. "Has student taken any standardized tests, like the IQ tests or the Iowa Tests?" (If YES: "Did the student perform on these tests as well as a child his or her age should?")

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Yes, has taken tests	52%	81%[a]	47%[a]	43%[b]	60%[b]	61%[b]
And performed as well as he should	(26)	(40)[a]	(24)[a]	(21)	(28)	(34)
Did not perform as well as he should	(6)	(9)	(6)	(4)	(7)	(7)
Don't know whether performed as he should	(20)	(32)[a]	(17)[a]	(18)	(25)	(20)
No, did not take tests	21	10 [a]	23 [a]	27 [b]	15 [b]	16 [b]
Don't know whether he has taken tests	27	9 [a]	30 [a]	30	25	23
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

---

[a] Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

[b] Differences between grades K-6 and grades 7-9 or 10-12 are statistically significant at .05 level.

Teachers' Expectations

Does the child's performance on these standardized tests affect what teachers expect of the child? About four out of ten (42%) parents felt it did, compared with about three in ten (27%) who felt otherwise. Another three in ten (31%) expressed no opinion on this issue.

Opinions on this issue were more evenly divided among Caucasian, or White, parents with about half (47%) expressing the view that the teacher's expectations of a child are affected by test scores, compared with four in ten (39%) who felt the teacher's expectations were not affected. Corresponding percentages for Negro, or Black, parents were 42 percent and 24 percent.

Among those parents who felt that teachers' expectations were affected by the child's performance on standardized tests, about half (45%) supported their view with the feeling that teachers generally expected more and better work from high scorers in tests. One parent in five (20%) felt the tests were poor measures of the child's ability and tended to yield incorrect judgements about the child's ability and potential; additional negative connotations were provided by the one parent in ten (9%) who felt tests were used excessively, and another one in ten (9%) who felt teachers generally gave more attention to high test scorers with the corresponding neglect of the students not performing well.

On the other hand, positive remarks toward testing in general were provided by about one parent in seven (14%) who felt tests were a useful device for teachers to not only learn, but act to improve upon, the students' weak areas; and another one in ten (12%) who had very general positive remarks about tests in general, e.g., that they were good and useful devices but with no further elaboration on this. (See Tables 17 and 18).

The variety in the types of responses above suggest that more definitive questions should be used in the future when dealing with this very important issue. The responses provided by the respondents are mainly indicative of the range of concerns among parents.

Table 17. "Do you think a child's performance on these tests affects what the teachers expect of him?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	Parents of Children in Grades K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Yes	42%	47%	42%	43%	38%	44%
No	27	39 a/	24 a/	24	31	27
Don't know	31	14 a/	34 a/	33	31	29
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 18. If "Yes" to above, "In what way are the teacher's expectations of the student affected by test scores?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	Parents of Children in Grades K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(316)	(55)	(263)	(147)	(63)	(84)
More, better work expected from high scorers	45%	40%	46%	45% b/	38% b/	57% b/
Tests, poor measures, lead to false judgements of ability	20	40 a/	16 a/	18	25	21
Teacher learns weak areas, students; more time spent on these, them	14	11	14	14	21	10
General positive remarks about use of tests	12	9	13	15	14	8
Tests used excessively	9	18 a/	7 a/	8	13	7
Teachers give more attention to high scorers	9	4	10	11	8	6
Test irrelevant	2	2	2	1	2	4
Other, vague	5	5	5	5	3	14

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a/ Differences statistically significant at the .05 level.

b/ Differences between grades K-6 or 7-9, and 10-12 statistically significant at .05 level.

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because some parents gave more than one answer.

CHAPTER FOUR

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND SCHOOL FACILITIES

How do parents feel regarding existing school facilities? Are the schools providing enough books, lunchroom facilities, classroom space, and the like, or not? These queries were put to the parents surveyed, and the findings indicate significant feelings of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. As many as eight in ten parents with opinions (79%) felt the schools provide enough books in class, but when asked about books that deal with things students are interested in, 66 percent said there were enough. Significant minorities of 35 and 34 percent respectively, voiced opinions about insufficient books to take home, and books which interested the students. Two-thirds (66%) felt the schools provided enough crossing guards.

Opinion was evenly divided on the matter of adequate lunchroom facilities. Half the parents said there were enough (51%), and half (49%) said there were not enough lunchroom facilities. The level of dissatisfaction was highest among the parents of elementary school children. Fully 80 percent of these parents felt the schools did not provide enough lunchroom facilities.

Dissatisfaction with each of the above facilities was more marked for the Negro, or Black, parents with opinions (by 12 to 29 percent) than among the Caucasian, or White parents. (See Table 19).

When parents were asked whether their child's school had a regular room where he could have his lunch, two-thirds (66%) replied in the affirmative. Of course, variations were great among those parents of elementary school children compared with the parents of children in junior and senior high schools. Only 31 percent of the elementary children's parents said their child's school had a room for lunch, compared with 97 percent of the parents of children in junior and senior high schools. Fully six out of ten (61%) parents of elementary school children said their child's school had no regular room for lunch, and eight percent were not certain whether the school had a lunchroom. The absence of a lunchroom was more often expressed by Negro, or Black, parents (34%) than by Caucasian, or White, parents (6%). (See Table 20).

Table 19. "Does the school (attended by the selected child) have enough or not enough" specified instructional materials and facilities?

	Among Those With Opinions			Percent of Total Sample Without Opinions	Percent Responding "Not Enough" Among Those With Opinions				
	Number Of Parents	Enough	Not Enough		Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
				(751)					
Books in class	642	79%	21%	15%	3%[a]	25%[a]	21%	22%	17%
Books to take home	709	65%	35%	6%	11%[a]	40%[a]	43%[c]	37%[c]	22%[c]
Books that deal with things the student is interested in	642	66%	34%	15%	15%[a]	37%[a]	34%	34%	33%
Crossing guards	366	66%	34%	51%	20%[a]	36%[a]	32%	32%	-[b]
Lunchroom facilities	587	51%	49%	22%	38%[a]	50%[a]	80%[d]	22%[d]	24%[d]

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a/ Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

b/ Number of parents with opinions too few for percentages.

c/ Differences between grades 10-12 and grades K-6 or 7-9 statistically significant at .05 level.

d/ Differences between grades K-6 and grades 7-9 or 10-12 statistically significant at .05 level.

Table 20. "Does the school your child attends have a regular room where he/she can have his/her lunch?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
School has a regular room for lunch	66%	91%[a/]	62%[a/]	31%[b/]	94%[b/]	100%[b/]
School has no regular room for lunch	30	6 [a/]	34 [a/]	61 [b/]	6 [b/]	- [b/]
Parent uncertain, no response	4	3	4	8	-	-
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

[a/] Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

[b/] Differences between grades K-6 and grades 7-9 and 10-12 statistically significant at .05 level.

About half of the parents surveyed (52%) said their children usually had lunch in the school lunchroom, although proportions varied greatly from 11 percent for elementary school children, to 89 percent for junior and senior high school students. Fully 80 percent of the elementary school children go home for lunch, say the parents. (See Table 21)

Table 21. "Where does you child usually have lunch during school days?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
School lunchroom	52%	52%	52%	11% a/	93% a/	85% a/
Elsewhere in school building	2	2	2	3	-	1
Commercial restaurant or store near school	2	2	2	1	1	4
At home	40	38	40	80 a/	6 a/	5 a/
Parent uncertain, other no response	4	6	4	5	-	5
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

---

a/ Differences between grades K-6 and grades 7-9 or 10-12 statistically significant at .05 level.

In addition to the facilities mentioned above, parents were asked the open question, "What other facilities are needed at school?" A total of 459 parents, or 61 percent of the total, said nothing more was needed, or gave no answer. Of the 292 parents who did reply, 25 percent reinforced their earlier criticism of lunchroom facilities by saying that more, and better, facilities were needed, and another 13 percent felt that better quality food should be made available to students. A wide variety of other facilities were mentioned by ten percent or less: More sports areas, gyms (10%), classrooms (7%), security (6%), books (5%), lockers (5%), toilets (3%), and other miscellaneous items (24%).

Overcrowding

When they were asked to indicate the number of students in their child's class in school, 63 percent of the parents queried replied with a definite number, while 37 percent neither knew nor offered an estimate. Among those who did reply, the reported class size ranged from less than 20 students to over 45 per class, with the average reported number being 31 students per class.

Asked whether the number of students in their child's class was too large, too small, or about right, about half (53%) said the class was too large, and four in ten (40%) said it was about right. Just one percent felt the classes were too small. (See Tables 22 and 23).

The proportion of parents feeling their child's class was too large, or about the right size, varied with the number of children estimated to be in the class. When the stated class size was 25 or fewer students, just eight percent felt it to be too large; 42 percent of the parents felt classes were too large when the size was from 26 to 30 students, and when the class size was over 35 students, three-fourths (75%) of the parents felt the class size to be too large. (See Table 24).

Table 22. "About how many are in the students class?"[a]

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
20 or less	3%	2%	3%	3%	1%	1%
21 - 25	6	5	6	7	2	5
26 - 30	16	10	17	20	16	11
31 - 35	18	18	18	22	20	13
36 - 40	15	21	14	19	16	9
41 - 45	3	3	3	3	2	3
46 and over	2	1	2	1	1	3
Parent uncertain, no response	37	40	37	25	42	55
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Average response [b]	31	32	31	31	32	30

---

[a] Parents of children in secondary grades were asked to estimate the number of students in their children's average class.

[b] Derived by using the mid-point for each class size range, 15 for "20 or less" and 50 for "46 and over." Parents with no response not included.

Table 23. "Is the number of students in the class too large, too small, or about right?" (Asked of those parents mentioning a class size).

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(465)	(73)	(392)	(257)	(93)	(89)
Too large	53%	62%	52%	53%	57%	49%
Too small	1	1	1	*	2	-
About right	40	31	42	42	35	43
Parent uncertain	6	6	5	5	6	8
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

---

* Less than one-half of one percent.

Table 24. "Is the number of students in the class too large, too small, or about right?" (Asked of those parents mentioning a class size).

	Total Surveyed	Among those estimating the student's class size to be 25 or less	26-30	31-35	36-40	41 and over
Number of Parents	(465)	(63)	(120)	(138)	(112)	(32)
Too large	53%	8%	42%	62%	76%	72%
Too small	1	2	2	-	-	-
About right	40	86	52	33	18	16
Parent uncertain	6	4	4	5	6	12
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Statistical significance of above differences among class size levels are valid at .01 level.

Not only does the prevailing view indicate that class size is too large, but a majority of 63 percent of the parents surveyed - and as high as 76 percent among parents of high school children - said the school as a whole had too many children. A minority of about two in ten (19%) were contrary minded, and 18 percent expressed no opinion. (See Table 25).

Table 25. "Would you say that your child's school has too many children or not?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Too many children	63%	64%	62%	55%[a]	61%[b]	76%[a,b]
Not too many children	19	23	19	26[a]	18	9[a]
Respondent uncertain	18	13	19	19	21	15
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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[a] Differences between grades K-6 and grades 10-12 significant at .05 level.

[b] Differences between grades 7-9 and 10-12 significant at .05 level.

Transportation

Two school children in three (66%) in the survey area get to school, either completely or in part, by walking. Three in ten (30%) use public transportation, and about one in ten (9%) use a school bus to get to school. A bare minority of four percent are driven to school by their parents or use other means to get to school. (See Table 26).

Table 26. "How does your child go to school?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
School bus	9%	18% a/	7% a/	16% b/	4% b/	2% b/
Walks	66	40 a/	71 a/	78 c/	69 c/	50 c/
Public transportation (SEPTA)	30	37	29	5 b/	42 b/	58 b/
Driven by parent	2	6	1	2	2	2
Other means	2	7	1	*	1	5

---

* Less than one-half of one percent.

a/ These differences statistically significant at .05 level.

b/ Differences between grades K-6 and grades 7-9 or 10-12 statistically significant at .05 level.

c/ Differences between grades 10-12 and grades K-6 or 7-9 statistically significant at .05 level.

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because some parents reported their children going to school by more than one means.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CURRICULUM

The survey covered the curriculum as well as instructional materials and facilities referred to in the preceeding chapter. Parents were asked whether or not the schools taught enough about the basic skills, Black history, science, music, getting along with others, as well as such things as right from wrong, and finding a good job. Furthermore, parents were asked what things should be added or deleted from the present curriculum.

Among those parents expressing opinions, less than two in ten felt not enough was taught in the schools about right from wrong (13%) or getting along with others (18%). A somewhat higher proportion, of about three in ten, felt not enough was being taught about music and art (29%), mathematics and science (30%), people's legal rights (30%), and reading and writing (33%). Dissatisfaction with the curriculum was expressed by a majority, however, when the subject came to finding a good job (58%), and African and Afro-American history (78%). Among the Black parents expressing opinions, fully 81 percent felt not enough was being taught about African and Afro-American history. A very different picture prevailed for White parents with opinions; just 18 percent felt not enough was being taught about Black history, 55 percent felt enough was being taught, and 26 percent expressed the view that too much was being taught about this history. With a single exception, Negro, or Black, parents less often felt that enough was being taught of each of the subjects mentioned above. (See Table 27-A and 27-B).

Table 27-A. "Have the schools taught the student enough or not enough" about specified subjects?"

	Percent Among Parents Expressing Opinions					
	Number of Parents	Enough	Not Enough	Qualified, Too Much, Other	Total	Percent of Total Sample Not Expressing Opinions
						(751)
Right from wrong	638	85%	13%	2%	100%	13%
Getting along with others	663	81	18	1	100	11
Music and art	671	70	29	1	100	10
People's legal rights [a]	304	70	30	*	100	59 [a]
Mathematics and science	703	68	30	2	100	4
Reading and writing	718	66	33	1	100	3
How to find a good job [a]	217	42	58	*	100	71 [a]
African and Afro-American history	531	20	78	2	100	28

---

[a] Parents of elementary school children were not asked these questions.

* Less than one-half of one percent.

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Table 27-B. "Have the schools taught the student enough or not enough" about specified subjects?"

Percent saying "Enough"[b] Among Those With Opinions

	Total "Enough"	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Reading and writing	66%	84%[c]	64%[c]	69%	63%	69%
Mathematics and science	68%	80[c]	67[c]	71	72	66
Music and art	70%	80[c]	69[c]	67	82	71
Getting along with others	81%	88	81	84	81	66
People's legal rights[a]	70%	81[c]	68[c]	—[a]	69	70
African and Afro-American history[e]	20%	81[c]	18[c]	18	26	21
How to find a good job[a]	42%	—[d]	42	—[a]	35	47
Right from wrong	85%	91	85	92	78	82

---

[a] Parents of elementary school children were not asked this question.

[b] Include those saying "too much."

[c] These differences significant at .05 level.

[d] Number of parents with opinions too small for percentage.

[e] For African and Afro-American history, the proportions of Caucasian or White parents saying enough, too much, and not enough were 55, 26, and 19 percent.

General support for increased efforts in teaching Black history were reinforced by about one parent in five (17%) who, when asked what should be taught in school that is not taught, or not taught enough, now, replied with Black history or culture. With a single exception, all parents giving this reply were Black. Each of these parents replied that not enough was taught about Black history when this question was explicitly asked earlier.

Better than one parent in ten (13%) felt not enough was taught in school about improved inter-personal relationships. This included interpersonal communication, inter-racial understanding, giving a better appearance to one's peers as well as adults, as well as dating behavior. About the same number (9%) supported increased teaching of morals, religion, and "good and bad." (See Table 28).

A very small minority of two percent responded with Black history when asked what things should not be taught in school. The overwhelming majority of better than nine in ten (92%) had no recommendations for deletions in the present curriculum. (See Table 29).

Table 28. "What things do you think should be taught in school which are not taught, or not taught enough, now?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
African and Afro-American, or Black, culture history[a]	17%	1%[b]	20%[b]	20%	15%	18%
Better inter-personal relations (with teachers, peers, dates, adults, persons of other races, religions)	8	9	8	4	8	10
Religion, morals, good and bad	9	2	10	9	12	8
Reading, English	6	6	6	6	6	8
Mathematics, science	5	4	5	5	5	5
History in general, American or world history, politics	4	5	4	4	5	4
Art, music	3	2	3	3	3	3
Self-confidence, pride, character, maturity	3	2	3	3	3	4
Sex, marriage	3	4	3	*	4	5
Foreign languages	2	2	2	-	3	4
Science	2	2	2	2	1	3
Other subjects	3	2	4	3	10	2
No response	46	60	44	47	43	48

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* Less than one-half of one percent.

[a] Includes two parents (less than one-half of one percent) who mentioned African languages.

[b] Differences significant at .05 level.

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because some gave more than one answer.

Table 29. "Are there any things now taught in school which you feel should not be taught there?"

	Total Surveyed
Number of Parents	(751)
African, and Afro-American, or Black, history, culture	2%[a]
Sex, marriage	1
Science, mathematics	1
History in general	1
Foreign languages	1
Political views of the teacher	1
Biological evolution	1
Other	1
No response	92

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[a] Among the 117 Caucasian, or White, parents and the 634 Negro, or Black parents surveyed, respective percentages were eight and one.

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because some gave more than one answer.

Separate breakdowns by race and grade level are not listed because of the small numbers of respondents in each group expressing information.

CHAPTER SIX

PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT WITH THE SCHOOL

A parent's involvement with the school and its staff can, and does, manifest itself in a variety of forms ranging from a very active two-way dialogue to a very passive role. The present survey indicated that about two-thirds of the parents claimed to have visited the school during school hours, and a majority of those who made the visit were left with a positive impression of the staff and facilities. Also, about two-thirds said they had spoken with their child's teacher during the past year and about nine in ten parents who had communicated with the teacher found him or her generally helpful.

The overwhelming majority of nine parents in ten were aware of Home and School Association meetings, and other meetings of parents at the school. However, about half of those aware of the meetings did not attend because, for the most part, the meeting times conflicted with work hours or because someone was needed at home to care for young children or the elderly and sick. Among those who did attend, a majority came away with positive impressions of the organization.

Asked what days and times would be most convenient for them to visit the school and talk with the teacher, about one-third didn't know or couldn't specify a time, about three in ten replied "anytime," and about two in ten specified weekdays from 2 to 5 p.m.

Communications With The Teacher

Better than six out of every ten parents (63%) surveyed said they had spoken with their child's teacher at some time during the past year. The figure is considerably more among parents of elementary school children (76%), and less among parents of high school students (47%). Among those who had, about half (52%) had done so at their own initiation, with the balance divided about evenly between visits initiated at the request of the teacher (22%) and spontaneous visits at meetings, on the street, in the school (25%). Parents and teachers most often talked about the students academic or classroom work (53%), about problems of discipline (17%), the student's home study and the part which they, the parents, can play in it (6%), and the student's shyness in class (5%).

The overwhelming majority of parents who spoke with the teacher found them generally helpful (88%) rather than not so (6%). (See Table 30).

Convenient Times To Meet With Teacher

Between the afternoon hours of 2 and 5 is the most convenient time for most parents to come to the school to talk with the teacher. When asked what days and times would be most convenient for them to visit the teacher, about one-third did not reply with a specific time (36%), and about three in ten (28%) simply said "anytime." Among the remainder, the specific time most frequently stated was between 2 and 5 in the afternoon (18%), and between 5 and 9 p.m. (9%). (See Table 31).

Visits to School

Almost two-thirds of the parents surveyed (64%) said they had visited their child's school at some time during regular school hours.

Among those parents who had an opportunity to visit the school, almost three fourths (74%) reported generally positive reactions. These reactions referred to the condition of the school in general (43%) as well as specific references to the order and discipline in the school (20%), its teachers (17%), the students (5%), the curriculum and facilities (3%), and the principal (2%).[a]

One-fourth (25%) had negative reactions to the school, and these specifically dealt with the lack of order, discipline, and security (14%), the overcrowded and otherwise inadequate facilities (9%), and staff inadequacy (7%). (See Table 32).

Criticism of the schools came from parents of senior high school students more often than from parents of elementary school children. Of the former group who visited the school, almost half (48%) mentioned at least one negative reaction to it, compared with one in five (20%) of the latter.

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[a] Totals for specific reasons exceed 74 percent because some gave more than one answ

Table 30. During the past year, did you ever have a chance to talk with the student's teacher(s)? (Among those saying "yes"): Did the teacher come to you first, or did you go to the teacher first? Did you find the teacher generally helpful or not? And what did you talk to the teacher about?

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Spoke with teacher	63%	55%	65%	76%[c]	58%[c]	47%[c]
Did not speak with the teacher	35	44	34	22[c,d]	39[c,d]	53[c,d]
No response, not applicable	2	1	1	2	3	*
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Among those who spoke with the teacher:						
Number of Parents	(473)	(64)	(410)	(262)	(95)	(90)
Parent initiated meeting	52%	69%[b]	50%[b]	52%	53%	56%
Teacher initiated meeting	22	6 [b]	24 [b]	24	19	16
Neither initiated, met spontaneously	25	25	24	23	28	27
Don't know, no response	1	-	2	1	-	1
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Parent spoke to teacher about . . .						
Student's academic work	53%	34%[b]	56%[b]	49%[c]	57%	63%[c]
Discipline of student	17	6 [b]	18 [b]	18	19	8
Student's home study, parents help with	6	3	6	8	5	3
Shyness, inhibitions of student, emotional problem	5	3	5	5	5	2
Students' attendance	2	-	2	2	-	3
Other specific responses	2	2	2	3	2	2
Student's behavior, vague response	35	59 [b]	33 [b]	42 [c]	27 [c]	28 [c]
	120%[a]	107%[a]	122%[a]	127%[a]	115%[a]	109%[a]

Table 30. (CONTINUED)

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(473)	(64)	(410)	(262)	(95)	(90)
Teacher was generally found to be --						
Helpful	88%	77% b/	90% b/	89%	87%	88%
Not helpful	6	3	5	5	4	9
Qualified answer, neither	3	1	3	3	5	2
Don't know, no answer	3	19 b/	2 b/	3	4	1
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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* Less than one-half of one percent.

a/ Total exceeds 100 percent because some parents gave more than one answer.

b/ Differences significant at .05 level.

c/ Differences between grades K-6 and grades 7-9 or 10-12 are statistically significant at .05 level.

d/ Differences between grades K-6 and 7-9, and between grades 7-9 and 10-12 are statistically significant at .05 level.

Table 31. Suppose you wanted to meet privately with the student's teacher after school hours, what days of the week would be most convenient for you? (For each day mentioned): What time of the day would be best for you?

	Total Surveyed
Number of Parents	(751)
Day of the Week	
Monday	68%
Tuesday	68
Wednesday	68
Thursday	65
Friday	63
"Anyday"	68
Time of the Day	
"Anytime"	28%
2-5 p.m.	18
5-9 p.m.	9
"Afternoon or evening"	4
Morning; 9 a.m.-noon	4
Other times	1
None, don't know	4
Day not given	32
	100%[a]

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[a] The times of the day best for the parent varied not more than one percent from one day of the week to another. The data listed here are for the composite replies from all days of the week.

Table 32. "Did you ever happen to visit the student's school during school hours?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Visited school	64%	67%	63%	76%[a]	55%	49%[a]
Did not visit school	35	32	36	23 [a]	45	49 [a]
No response	1	1	1	1	-	2
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

"What was your reaction to the school?" (Asked of those parents saying they had visited school)

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(478)	(78)	(400)	(261)	(90)	(95)
Positive reactions to:						
School in general	43%	45%	43%	49%[a]	40%	36%[a]
Order, discipline	20	17	20	21	16	15
Teachers	17	12	20	20	23	10
Students	5	1	6	7	1	5
Curriculum, facilities	3	4	3	3	7	-
Principal	2	1	2	1	3	-
Other	2	2	2	1	2	-
TOTAL WITH AT LEAST ONE POSITIVE REACTION	(74%)	(68%)	(74%)	(78%)[a]	(68%)	(49%)[a]
Negative reactions to:						
Lack of order, security, discipline	14	13	14	9	18	21
Overcrowding, inadequate facilities	9	13	9	5 [a]	8 [a]	26 [a]
Staff inadequate in number and quality	7	3	8	9	8	3
Parent felt uncomfortable	1	-	1	1	-	1
Other	4	5	4	4	1	12
TOTAL WITH AT LEAST ONE NEGATIVE REACTION	(25%)	(24%)	(25%)	(20%)[a]	(27%)[a]	(48%)[a]
Don't know, no response	5	4	5	5	6	4

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a/ Differences between grades 10-12 and grades K-6 or 7-9 significant at .05 level.

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because some parents gave more than one answer.

School Counselors

Opinion divides evenly on whether or not the schools have enough counselors, with 34 percent opting for each side.

About four in ten parents surveyed (38%) perceived of the school counselors as assisting students, in very generally defined ways, and about one parent in five (19%) wasn't sure what the counselors did. The remainder were more specific about the kinds of things counselors did: from functioning as a parent-student-teacher lisison (13%), to advising students on academic matters (13%), dealing with discipline problems (8%), careers and jobs (5%), personal problems (5%), and preparing students for college (3%). A small minority of about one parent out of twenty-five (4%) said that counselors were generally lazy and did nothing. (See Table 33).

Non-Teaching Assistants

In addition to the regular teaching staff, the schools employ non-teaching assistants for a variety of tasks. About four parents in ten (40%) had heard of the non-teaching assistants, and among those who had, the duties of the NTA were generally described in terms of general assistance to the teacher (15% of the total sample), patroling, supervising, disciplining, or preventing disorders (16%), and in helping teachers maintain records (5%), teach (3%), and function as a classroom aide (4%). (See Table 34).

Almost nine in ten (92%) did not know the number of NTA's at their child's school. Answers from the remaining parents were scattered from "none" to "more than ten." (See Table 35).

Table 33. "Would you say the student's school has enough or not enough counselors?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Enough counselors	34%	38%	33%	23%	45%	41%
Not enough counselors	34	26	35	35	30	35
Don't know, no answer	32	36	32	42	25	24
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
"What do the counselors actually do at school, as far as you know?"						
Assist students with problem in general, unspecified	38%	33%	39%	39%	42%	38%
Communicating with parents about child's work, behavior	13	9	14	15	15	10
Assist student with academic, class problems	13	16	13	10	16	22
Deal with discipline problems	8	9	8	8	9	8
Student careers and jobs	5	3	5	1 [b]	4	11 [b]
Help student with personal problems, family, money	5	9	5	8	4	4
Assist teacher in record-keeping, administration, discipline	3	1	4	4	4	2
Assist student prepare for college	3	10 [a]	2 [a]	-	1	6
Other responses	2	2	2	2	4	3
Sit around, do nothing; lazy, ineffective	4	3	4	1	6	6
Don't know, no answer	19	12 [a]	21 [a]	24 [b]	18	14 [b]

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[a] Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

[b] Differences between grades K-6 and grades 10-12 statistically significant at .05 level.

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because some parents gave more than one answer.

Table 34. "Did you ever happen to hear of non-teaching assistants, or NTA's, in the schools? What do the NTA's do in school?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Heard of NTA's	40%	45%	40%	40%	37%	45%
What do they do?[a/]						
Assist teachers in . .						
general	(15	(13	(15	(15	(13	(18
record-keeping	(5	(3	(5	(6	(4	(4
discipline in class	(4	(4	(4	(3	(4	(4
supervising class	(3	(5	(3	(5	(3	(2
teaching	(3	(1	(3	(4	(1	(3
other ways	(1	(1	(1	(2	(1	(1
Like classroom aide	(4	(1	(4	(4	(3	(4
Patrols, guards, prevents disorders in school	(9	(21	(8	(8	(12	(13
Don't know	(1	(4	(1	(1	(1	(1
Not heard of NTA's	54	46	55	56	58	49
No response	6	9	5	4	5	6
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

[a/] Total for specific activities of non-teaching assistants exceeds those having "heard of NTA's" because some parents gave more than one response.

Table 35. "About how many non-teaching assistants are at (school)?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
None	1%	5%	1%	1%	3%	2%
One	2	5	1	3	1	1
Two, a few	1	3	1	2	-	1
Three to five	2	-	2	2	1	1
Six to ten, many	1	3	1	1	2	3
More than ten	1	1	1	1	-	3
"Not enough"	*	2	-	-	1	-
Don't know	32	26	33	30	29	34
Not asked, had not heard of NTA's	60	55	60	60	63	55
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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* Less than one-half of one percent.

Home and School Association Meetings

As many as nine parents out of every ten (93%) were aware of the Home and School Association, or some type of parents' group, at their child's school, and about as many (88%) were also aware of general parents' meetings at the school. Among those parents aware of Home and School, only one third (33%) said they had attended any meetings of the group at their child's school. Twice as many parents of elementary school children (44%) attended these meetings than did parents of senior high school students (19%). Among those parents aware of Home and School, only one third (33%) said they had attended any meetings of the group at their child's school. Reaction to the meetings among those who had attended were generally favorable; two-thirds of these parents (66%) reacted positively to the meetings in general and the opportunities to see the school's facilities, and some parents remarked favorably about the teachers and staff (3%), and the benefits of the meeting to the general community (4%). There were also some negative remarks as well, but these were confined to a minority of 15 percent and their criticism focused upon generally uninformative and unimpressive meetings (6%), and a variety of criticisms involving the irrelevance of subjects discussed at the meetings (3%), the poor attendance (3%), and the low correlation between promises made at the meetings and action subsequently taken (3%).

About half (52%) of the parents aware of the Home and School Association said they had not attended any meetings. The prevailing reason given for this was the inconvenience of the meeting times (for 43% of those not attending), and the need for a person in the house to mind children, the ill, or the elderly (18%). One parent out of every twenty (5%) said they were informed of the meetings too late and could not attend because of this. (See Table 36, 37, and 38).

Table 36. Awareness of a Home and School Association, and General Parents' Meetings at Child's School.

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Aware of Home and School Association						
Yes	93%	94%	93%	96%	90%	92%
No	2	1	2	1	*	2
Don't know	5	5	5	3	10	6
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Aware of General Parents' Meetings						
Yes	88%	84%	89%	95%	83%	83%
No	5	8	5	3	7	7
Don't know	7	8	6	2	10	10
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Attendance at Meetings (in Preceeding School Year) of Those Aware of Home and School Association, and General Parents' Meetings at Child's School.

Number of Parents	(698)	(110)	(588)	(330)	(147)	(177)
Aware of Home and School Association						
Attended meetings	33%	35%	32%	44%[a/]	24%[a/]	19%[a/]
Did not attend meetings	52	48	53	43 [a/]	61 [a/]	63 [a/]
No response, don't know	15	17	15	13	15	18
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 36. (CONTINUED)

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(660)	(99)	(561)	(326)	(135)	(160)
Aware of General Parents' Meetings						
Attended meetings	44%	44%	44%	55%[b]	42%[b]	26%[b]
Did not attend meetings	50	42	50	38 [a]	56 [a]	69 [a]
No response, don't know	6	14	6	7	2	5
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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* Less than one-half of one percent.

[a] Differences between grades K-6 and 7-9 or 10-12 statistically significant at .05 level.

[b] Differences between grades K-6 and 7-9, K-6 and 10-12, and 7-9 and 10-12 statistically significant at .05 level.

Table 37. Parents' Reactions to Meetings Among Those Who Attended.

	Home and School Association	General Parents' Meetings
Parents Attending Meetings	(228)	(290)
Reactions to Meetings		
Informative, interesting, better aware of conditions, facilities	66%	73%
Met other parents, good communigy relations	4	2
Met, pleased with, staff	3	5
Uniformative	6	8
Subjects discussed at meetings not related to problems	3	2
Too much talk, not enough action	3	2
Meetings poorly attended	2	2
School staff poor, unimpressive	*	1
Inadequate school facilities	*	*
Parents talked down to	-	1
Other negative	1	1
Vague answer, neither favorable nor unfavorable, not specific	12	9

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* Less than one-half of one percent.

Note: Totals may exceed 100 percent because some parents gave more than one answer.

Table 38. Reasons Parents Did Not Attend Home and School Association, or General Parents' Meetings.

	Home and School Association	General Parents' Meetings
Parents Not Attending Meetings	(363)	(328)
Hours inconvenient; work during meeting times	43%	42%
Need someone at home to care for children, ill, elderly	18	20
Not informed of meetings; informed too late	5	5
Distance too far, transportation difficult	4	3
Fearful of going out alone at night, need companion	2	3
Don't care, apathetic	2	4
Presence ineffective, controlled by clique	1	2
Other reasons	3	1
No reason given	22	20
	100%	100%

When they want to talk to someone about the schools, parents more often direct their communications to either friends and relatives, an unspecified person at the school, or to the principal directly. About two parents in ten surveyed so replied in each of these categories. About one parent in every ten would go to the Home and School Association, or to one of that organization's coordinators in the school (11%), or to the teacher specifically (9%). But for eight percent of the parents (19% among Caucasian or White parents), there was no one to whom they felt communication could be directed. (See Table 39).

Table 39. "When you want to talk to someone around here about the schools, who do you generally talk to?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	Parents of Children in Grades K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Friends, neighbors, relatives	19%	24%	18%	16%	21%	23%
Someone at school (unspecified	19	6 [a]	21 [a]	20	18	19
Principal of school	18	23	17	20	17	14
Home and School Association, Coordinator	11	10	12	18	7	9
Teacher in school	9	3	9	11	8	4
No one, cannot talk to anyone	8	19 [a]	6 [a]	7	9	9
Committeeman, mayor, ward chairman	4	2	5	4	4	4
Superintendent of schools	3	3	4	3	5	3
Others	3	3	4	4	3	3
Don't know, no answer	16	17	16	13	21	19

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[a] Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

Note: Totals exceed 100 percent because some parents gave more than one answer.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCIPLINE AND SECURITY

The majority of parents with opinions on the matter felt there were enough personnel in the schools to supervise students properly, and five times as many parents felt their children were safe in school rather than felt they may "get hurt" there. Even though there was this confidence in the security of the school, the majority of parents supported the use of discipline within the schools, and significant minorities endorsed the use of limited physical punishment in the schools.

Supervisory Personnel

Are there enough or not enough personnel in school to supervise the students properly? About one-fourth of the parents surveyed (24%) did not reply to this question, but among the remaining, about one and a half times as many felt there were enough (44%) rather than not enough (31%) supervisory personnel. However, opinion was almost evenly divided among the parents of senior high school students; 40 percent felt there were enough, and 37 percent felt there were not enough, personnel in schools to supervise students. (See Table 40).

Table 40. "Are there enough or not enough personnel in the student's school to properly supervise the students?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Enough personnel	44%	50%	43%	49%	42%	40%
Not enough personnel	31	32	31	26 b/	31	37 b/
Don't know	24	16 a/	25 a/	24	26	23
Qualified answer	1	2	1	1	1	-
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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a/ Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

b/ Differences between grades K-6 and 10-12 statistically significant at .05 level.

Pupil Safety Within the School

The overwhelming majority of parents, at the time of the survey, expressed confidence that their children would be safe in school (80%) rather than felt he may get hurt there (15%). However, the proportion of fearful and uncertain parents was higher among the Caucasian, or White, parents than among the total sample. While 15 percent of the general sample felt their children may get hurt in school, and five percent either gave qualified or uncertain responses to this question, corresponding proportions among the Caucasian, or White, parents surveyed were 22 and 13 percent. Comparison among parents of children at several grade levels shows that parents of elementary school children less often fear their children may get hurt (10%) than do parents of junior (20%) and senior (21%) high school students.

When the minority of 15 percent of the total sample fearful of their children getting hurt were further queried as to why they felt that way, the great majority mentioned physical violence among the students at school (85%), racial disturbances (11%), weapons carried (9%), and the psychological and emotional consequences which this fear has upon children (9%).

Very few of the frightened parents offered any concrete solutions to the problem. One fourth could offer no remedy (26%), and another fourth replied in a very general way for "more security and protection" (28%). Increased numbers of school disciplinarians and teachers to handle discipline problems was recommended by about one in five (19%), and about the same number (19%) called for the specific use of more Police, primarily outside and near to the school building. (See Table 41).

Table 41. "When the student is in school, do you usually feel that he or she will be safe, or do you usually feel that he or she may get hurt?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student		
				K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Will be safe	80%	65% [a]	82% [a]	87% [b]	75% [b]	73% [b,c]
May get hurt	15	22 [a]	14 [a]	10 [b]	20 [b]	21 [b]
Qualified reply	2	10 [a]	1 [a]	1	4	4
Don't know	3	3	3	2	1	2
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 41. (CONTINUED)

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
(AMONG THOSE WHO FEEL THEIR CHILD MAY GET HURT): Why do you feel this way?						
Number of Parents	(123)	(27)	(96)	(38)	(39)	(48)
Violence at school in general	85%	95%	79%	84%	86%	81%
Racial disturbances	11	15	9	5	5	15
Weapons on students	9	7	9	13	8	5
Emotional, psychological disturbances generated by violence, fear	9	22	4	8	5	8
Thefts	2	-	2	-	5	-
Traffic	2	4	*	3	3	2
Vague reply	2	4	*	7	5	3
(AMONG THOSE WHO FEEL THEIR CHILD MAY GET HURT)? What can the school administration do to make the school safer for the student?						
Number of Parents	(123)	(27)	(96)	(38)	(39)	(48)
More protection, security in general	28%	30%	28%	39%	20%	19%
More, firmer school disciplinarians	19	19	19	29	13	13
More City Police generally	8	15	7	3	10	10
More City Police near, around school building	8	4	11	11	15	2
More City Police in school building	3	15	2	3	8	4
More non-teaching assistants	3	15	-	-	10	-
Expel "trouble-makers"	6	11	5	5	5	4
Nothing can be done	8	7	7	11	3	8
Other recommendations	10	11	10	13	10	10
Don't know	26	10	28	10	21	38

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* Less than one-half of one percent.

a/ Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

b/ Differences between grades K-6 and grades 7-9 or 10-12 statistically significant at .05 level.

c/ Caucasian or White parents, 48 percent; Negro or Black parents, 78 percent.

Discipline

There is, and has been, considerable debate within the educational, and the general, community about the role which discipline should play in the schools. Some professionals recommend more, while others recommend reduced discipline, including physical punishment. The subject of discipline is one of which few groups of people agree, either to the range or substance of activities and responsibilities which should be assumed by school authorities.

The issue thus is one fraught with debate, confusion, but one which has a very important bearing upon the form of education -- in a very broad sense -- which children receive.

Thus, when we raised the issue of discipline to parents, this was purposely done in a very general way, so as not to suggest any specific aspects of discipline, but rather to allow parents to respond with those aspects and definitions of discipline uppermost in their thoughts. Our interviewers asked the parents: "One thing that many parents are concerned about is discipline in the schools. How do you feel about this?"

In very general terms, about nine times as many parents support the use of discipline in the schools (52%) rather than say it should be reduced (6%); only a bare minority support the need for specific parental approval for such discipline (1%), and the same number (1%) volunteered the recommendation that more Police are needed near the schools.[a]

Regarding the type of punishment to be administered, just slightly more parents approved increased physical punishment (16%) than said it should be reduced (11%). About one parent in ten (11%) felt the school should make whatever decisions it felt appropriate regarding the form of discipline to be used. As for specific types of discipline outside of physical punishment, the most frequent suggestion called for detention of students either after school hours or during recesses (11%), assignment of problem students to jobs in the school building (6%), and giving them extra homework (5%). Only one parent in twenty-five (4%) felt the problem students should be expelled or suspended from school.

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[a] However, greater support of the need for Police was expressed in response to questions dealt with earlier in this chapter.

Teachers, as well as the school generally, were referred to in each of the issues discussed thus far. However, some parents' remarks focused more specifically upon the role of the teacher in the classroom. Among those few parents who did refer to this, the most frequent comment was that teachers should be respected more by students than they are now (5%). Some parents complained, however, that teachers were by and large too lax with, and fearful of, students and disciplining them (3%).

Regarding their own role in the discipline situation, one parent in ten (9%) felt parents need to, and should, discipline students more. A slightly smaller number (7%) complained that the school didn't advise them sufficiently about their child's discipline problems. (See Table 42).

A few examples of the wide range of responses follow:

> "I feel very strong about discipline; not too extreme to make a child a nervous wreck, but some type of punishment to make them know they must obey."
>
> "Children don't get enough discipline in the schools; I believe what most children need is a good old-fashioned spanking, most of them don't get it at home."
>
> "Teachers should have control over classes; schools should use more discipline, but it must be cooperative between home and school."
>
> "Teachers should be able to tell the children what to do rather than the children telling them what to do."
>
> "If my child in elementary school acted up, I would want the teacher to punish her."
>
> "The teachers don't keep children after school like they used to or punish them in any way; the teachers leave before the whole class is out sometimes."
>
> "It depends upon the child, but I feel the teacher should decide."

Table 42. "One thing that many parents are concerned about is discipline in the schools. How do you feel about this?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
General Reactions						
Discipline supported, should be increased in schools	52%	49%	53%	49%[b/]	53%	60%[b/]
Same as above, but with parental approval	1	1	1	1	1	1
Other support for increased discipline in school	2	-	2	1	1	3
More Police around school	1	4	1	-	-	2
Reduce, discourage discipline, not needed	6	8	6	7	8	6
Form of Discipline						
Physical punishment approved in general	16	3 [a/]	19 [a/]	22 [c/]	11 [c/]	12 [c/]
Physical punishment but with parental approval	2	-	3	4	2	1
Reduce, discourage physical punishment	11	10	11	12	15	7
Detention after school, or during recess	11	8	12	11	10	10
Assigned jobs in school, denied privileges	6	1	7	8	6	6
Assigned extra homework	5	3	5	5	6	3
Expelled, sent home	4	5	4	2	5	8
Approve whatever school or teacher feels appropriate	11	8	13	10	12	12
Role of The Teacher						
Should be respected more	5	15 [a/]	4 [a/]	3	9	6
Too lax, fearful of students	3	14 [a/]	2 [a/]	2	4	4
Punish unfairly, should discipline all students equally	1	3	1	1	2	2

Table 42. (CONTINUED)

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or Black	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Communication With Parents						
Parents should be advised more about child's discipline problems	7%	5%	8%	8%	7%	7%
Parents should discipline students more	9	5	10	8	10	9
Miscellaneous Replies	2	3	2	3	3	4
No Answer, Don't Know	6	9	5	6	6	5

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a/ Differences statistically different at .05 level.

b/ Differences between grades K-6 and 10-12 statistically significant at .05 level.

c/ Differences between grades K-6 and grades 7-9 or 10-12 statistically significant at .05 level.

Note: Totals exceed 100 percent because some parents gave more than one answer.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCRIMINATION AND REJECTION IN THE SCHOOLS

A small minority of parents registered the complaint that either their child in school (13%) or the parents themselves (7%) had felt discriminated against in the schools for one reason or another.

The claim about their child being discriminated against came from almost double the proportion of Caucasian, or White, parents (23%) than from Negro, or Black, parents (12%). However, feelings that the parents themselves had been discriminated against in the schools did not substantially differ between the two groups of parents. (See Table 43).

Racial discrimination was the most frequently mentioned type of discrimination among the minority of parents who said they or their children had experienced it in school. Eighty percent of these parents surveyed mentioned their children having felt discriminated against in school because of race. For the remaining parents, the type of discrimination was not specifically defined (20%), with discrimination because of religion or neighborhood felt by two and three percent respectively.

The felt discrimination was attributed to teachers (32%) slightly more often than to other students (23%), with principals (16%) and the school system, its administration and policies (9%) less often assuming responsibility in the parents' mind for the discrimination.

In the vast majority of instances of discrimination - 86 percent, nothing was reported as having been done either to bring the matter to the attention of authorities or to correct the situation. The very small number of parents (14%) who did comment on the consequences of the discrimination reported, mentioned that the offending persons were either reprimanded or transferred (3%), or that no action had yet been taken (3%). Another three percent said the complaint of discrimination was not registered for fear of retaliation. (See Table 44).

Table 43. Reports of students having been discriminated against in school during the past year; reports of parents having been discriminated against in school.

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Number of Students	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Student Felt Discriminated Against in School						
Yes	13%	23%[a]	12%[a]	8%[b]	15%[b]	17%[b]
No	85	76 [a]	86 [a]	90 [b]	82 [b]	81 [b]
Don't know, no response	2	1	2	2	3	2
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Parent Felt Discriminated Against in School						
Yes	7%	8%	6%	8%	3%	9%
No	92	91	93	91	96	90
Don't know, no response	1	1	1	1	1	1
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

---

[a] Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

[b] Differences between grades K-6 and 7-9 or 10-12 statistically significant at .05 level.

Note: Questions worded: "During the past year, did the student ever feel discriminated against in school for any reason, or not?" and "thinking now about yourself, have you ever felt any form of discrimination against you from the schools for any reason or not?"

Table 44. The source of the discrimination, the type of discrimination, and the consequence among those students for which discrimination was reported.

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black
Parents saying child felt discriminated against in school	(101)	(27)	(74)
Source of Discrimination Against Student			
Teacher	32%	15%	38%
Principal	16	11	18
Another student	23	70 a/	8 a/
School system, policy, administration	9	4	11
Not mentioned	26	26	25
Type of Discrimination Against Student			
Racial	80%	96%	75%
General favoritism	(44	(44	(43
Minor physical contact	(11	(26	(5
Verbal attack, obsenities	(11	(15	(11
Physical assault	(2	(7	(-
Grades lower	(3	(4	(3
Other	(9	(-	(13
Religious	2	7	-
Neighborhood	3	-	3
Other, unspecified	20	18	23
Consequence of Discrimination Against Student			
Complaint registered, no action taken	3%	7%	1%
Complaint not registered for fear of retaliation	3	7	1
Complaint not registered, reason unspecified	2	4	2
Offending person reprimanded, transferred	3	7	1
Other	3	7	2
No consequence mentioned	86	68	93

---

a/ Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

Note: Totals may exceed 100 percent because some parents mentioned more than one instance of discrimination.

Breakdowns by grade level are not listed because of the small number of cases at each level.

Racial discrimination was also the major type of discrimination reported by parents as having occurred against themselves in school. About seven in ten parents (68%) among those few who reported any discrimination against them in school singled out racial discrimation as the specific type. The remaining 32 percent were not specific about the type of discrimination they encountered. The source of the discrimination was more often mentioned to be the principal (40%) than either teachers (18%) or other parents (12%). About one-fourth (24%) did not mention the source of the discrimination.

Only two parents (4%) of the total reporting some discrimination against them mentioned any consequence taken as a result of the discrimination. The overwhelming majority (96%) replied nothing about consequences of discrimination. (See Table 45).

Table 45. The source, type and consequence of discrimination against parents from schools, among those parents for which discrimination was reported.

	Total Surveyed
Parents having felt discriminated against in school	(50)
Source of Discrimination Against Parent	
Teacher	18%
Principal	40
Other parents	12
Student	2
School administration, policy	4
Not mentioned	24
	100%
Type of Discrimination Against Parent	
Racial	68%
General favoritism	(54
Verbal attack, obsenities	(8
Minor physical contact	(2
Other, vague	(4
Type vague, unspecified	32
	100%
Consequence of Discrimination Against Parent	
Apology made to offended parent	2%
Offending person reprimanded	2
No consequence mentioned	96
	100%

Note: Separate breakdowns by race and grade level of student are not listed because of the small number of cases involved.

CHAPTER NINE

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

One of the major purposes of the research was to assess the extent to which parents were now, and felt they should increasingly become, involved with their schools; and, the extent to which they felt existing community organizations represented them in dealing with the schools. One medium by which parents can become more involved in their schools is in local school committees.

Parents were asked whether local school committees would be a good idea or not, and what kinds of decisions these committees should help to make. Our question on this was prefaced by the following brief description:

> "As you may know, the schools for the entire city of Philadelphia are now legally administered by a School Board, whose members are selected by the Mayor. The School Board now makes decisions which affect the schools of the City.
>
> "Now, some people have suggested school committees for various parts of the City made up of parents and other adults who live in those parts of the City. These people would help make decisions about the schools in their own community."

Following this, the interviewers simply asked: "When you think about it, would these school committees be a good idea or not a good idea?"

The results indicated that almost three times as many parents said it was a good idea (70%) rather than not a good idea (25%). Included in these responses were a small number (2%) who said the idea was both good in some respects and not good in other respects. The Caucasian, or White, parents surveyed differed from the total in that a far smaller percentage difference separated those feeling positively and negatively toward the idea. Among the Caucasian, or White, parents just slightly better than half (56%) said it was a good idea, and slightly less than half (42%) were contrary minded, with two percent undecided. (See Table 46).

Table 46. ". . . some people have suggested school committees for various parts of the City made up of parents and other adults who live in those parts of the City. These people would help make decisions about the schools in their own community.

". . . would these school committees be a good idea or not a good idea?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	6-9	10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
School committees of community adults are - -						
Good idea	68%	56%[a]	69%[a]	68%	66%	73%
Not a good idea	23	42 [a]	19 [a]	24	24	23
Qualified[b]	2	-	3	2	1	1
Don't know, no response	7	2	9	6	9	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

---

[a] Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

[b] Good in some respects, not good in other respects.

Those parents in favor of the idea of local committees supported their view with the reasons that such committees would better understand the school's needs (40%), that is, they would be "better" than existing authority, and that the community is more interested and concerned than existing authority, in what happens in the schools (22%). About one in ten (12%) point up the belief that the committee would represent a natural or legal right of parents because their children are affected by school policy, and that it is their taxes which support the educational institution. And fewer parents (7%) look upon the committees as a useful medium to improve school-community relations. A bare minority of one in thirty-three (3%) support their position with the view that such committees would explicitly be better for the students, in terms of increased motivation and self-respect generated by large scale community interest and concern.

Some of the comments recorded in support of this view were:

> "(The parents) are more concerned, and more aware, of the situations going on than the people running the schools. After all, their children are going there."
>
> "It is our children, and I think we have a right to make suggestions."
>
> "If you have a committee in your area, you know the children; the children would listen to you better than a total stranger."
>
> "We pay taxes and should be allowed to voice opinions about schools."

Almost half of the parents opposing the idea felt that the community was not qualified to assume the responsibilities which teaching and school administration required (44%), and about one parent in five in this group contended that local committees would lead to a chaotic situation without fixed standards of either student achievement or staff requirements (18%). Others (18%) felt the committees would generate an undue amount of discrimination, corruption, cliques, and "in groups" (18%). About one in ten (12%) specifically expressed the fear that local school committees might provoke a prolonged teacher's strike, as in New York City. (See Table 47A and 47B).

Table 47A. "What makes you feel that way?" Asked of parents saying it was a "good idea."

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Total parents saying it was "a good idea"	(519)	(66)	(453)	(234)	(103)	(141)
Community better understands school needs	40%	35%	40%	41%	38%	40%
Community more interested, concerned in schools	22	21	22	25	21	19
Vague answer, "just a good idea"	13	15	12	12	23	11
Involvement a right of parents	12	14	12	10	13	13
Improve school community relations	7	6	7	6	9	11
Better for students	3	3	3	3	7	3
Qualified answer: Good idea if committee qualified, responsible	4	5	4	3	4	6
Good idea if fair, democratic representation	2	3	2	3	1	2
Other	7	9	7	6	7	11

Note: Totals exceed 100 percent because some parents gave more than one answer.

Table 47B. "What makes you feel that way?" Asked of parents saying it was "not a good idea."

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Total parents saying it was "not a good idea"	(187)	(51)	(136)	(84)	(39)	(44)
Community, parents not qualified	44%	53%	41%	38%	49%	48%
Would lead to lack of standardization in curriculum, staff, etc.; confused	18	6	23	20	13	18
Would lead to discrimination, cliques, "in" groups	18	22	18	15	20	23
Must avoid strike as in New York City	12	14	11	12	10	11
Vague, "just a bad idea"	7	6	7	7	4	-
No need for change	6	6	6	10	-	5
Oppose "decentralization"	3	6	-	1	3	-
Increase bureaucracy	3	4	3	4	-	5
Parents too apathetic	2	2	2	2	3	-
Central Board support needed	2	4	-	-	-	5
Qualified answer: Not a good idea, but depends on . . .						
Composition of committee	2	2	2	2	-	5
Decisions it can make	2	-	2	2	-	2
Don't know	4	4	4	6	4	4

Note: Totals exceed 100 percent because some parents gave more than one answer.

Some of the comments recorded in support of this view were:

> "The parents may not be qualified for such a job. They don't know about teaching."
>
> "There'd be too many different school committees each with a different set of standards. Just make for confusion all around. We should try and improve things but keep them uniform."
>
> "These committees might be biased; some members might force teachers to favor their children or their friend's children."
>
> "Because of the trouble they had in New York City."

Those parents who felt the idea of a local school committee was a good idea were then asked to specify the kinds of decisions this committee should help to make.

The kinds of decisions most often mentioned were those directly relating to the classroom situation, and the physical plant and administration of the school. Specifically, about one-fourth of the parents felt that a local committee should help make decisions about curriculum (26%), and somewhat smaller proportions felt it should be concerned with discipline of the students (18%), homework, remedial and extra-curricular activities (9%), and classroom size (5%). Concern with the physical resources and administration of the schools also was uppermost in the minds of many, with general school facilities and equipment (including the cafeteria, food, and books) mentioned by 18 percent, bussing and transportation referred to by 13 percent, with lesser proportions mentioning the construction of school buildings and the establishment of new schools (5%), budget allocation (5%), and the security of children in the school building (8%).

Relatively few of the parents surveyed felt the committee should help make decisions explicitly related to the teachers and the school staff in general. Less than one parent in ten -- seven percent among the parents who felt local committees were a good idea (or 5 percent among the total sample) said that the committee should help make decisions about the hiring and firing of teachers. Just two percent mentioned the hiring and firing of principals, three percent mentioned the hiring and firing of the school staff in general, with four percent mentioning the committees participation in establishing standards of teacher qualification. When the total number of parents mentioning at least one item relevant to school staff is combined, the total is ten percent. (This is slightly less than the total of each item separately because some parents gave more than one reply in this area). (See Table 48).

Table 48. "What kinds of decisions should this committee help to make," asked those who say that school committees are a "good idea."

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Parents who say school committees are a "good idea"	(519)	(66)	(453)	(234)	(103)	(141)
Curriculum content, form	26%	17%	27%	27%	22%	26%
All things, things in general	24	20	25	24	26	22
School facilities, including cafeteria, food, books, class space, equipment	18	14	18	21	19	11
Discipline of students	17	20	16	12 a/	18	24 a/
Busing, transportation	13	17	13	18	12	9
Homework, remedial work, extra-curricular activities	9	6	10	12	6	6
Teachers: hiring, firing	7	5	7	7	10	6
Class size	5	8	5	6	8	3
Construction of new buildings	5	5	5	8	3	4
Budget allocation	5	3	5	7	4	4
Establishment of teacher qualifications	4	5	4	5	4	4
Security of children, and buildings	4	8	3	3	6	5
Principals: hiring, firing	2	2	2	2	4	1
General staff hiring	3	5	3	4	4	1
Other	2	3	2	2	2	1

---

a/ Differences statistically significant at .05 level.

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because some parents gave more than one answer.

A New Administrative District

Throughout the months immediately preceeding and during the survey, there were numerous articles in the neighborhood and local press about a new administrative school district occupying a large part of the survey area. A Superintendent had been appointed by the School Board for the new District, and he participated in many public meetings of community groups in the area.

At the time of the survey, one parent in five (20%) had heard of the new district and one-third (33%) of those parents having heard of the new district (or 7 percent of the total sample) were aware of the name of the new Superintendent. (See Tables 49 and 50).

Table 49. "Did you happen to hear about a new school district for this community?"

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	 7-9	 10-12
Number of Parents	(751)	(117)	(634)	(344)	(163)	(193)
Yes ——	20%	37%	17%	23%	18%	19%
No	77	56	81	75	79	78
Don't know, no response	3	7	2	2	3	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 50. Name of new district superintendent, and the ways in which new district will differ from the previous district. Asked of those who reported having heard of new school district for community.

	Total Surveyed	Caucasian or White	Negro or Black	By Grade Level of Student K-6	7-9	10-12
Parents having heard of new district	(153)	(43)	(110)	(80)	(30)	(36)
Correct name	33%	47%	28%	34%	40%	25%
Name of another District Superintendent	3	-	4	4	-	3
Superintendent of Schools, President of Board of Education, others	6	2	7	2	10	11
Don't know	58	51	61	60	50	61
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
New district will						
Be better, no specific reason	23%	21%	27%	24%	43%	14%
Be better because smaller in size	13	19	11	12	17	8
Not be different from earlier district	12	23	7	14	3	14
Be better because of more community participation	3	3	3	3	3	-
Be worse because of "decentralization"	1	-	1	-	3	-
Other	3	3	3	-	3	6
No response, don't know	48	35	51	43	37	68

Note: Totals may exceed 100 percent because some gave more than one answer.

Community Organizations

The survey indicated that relatively few of the parents interviewed belonged to organizations in the community, and few felt that specific community organizations would represent them best in dealing with school authority.

The survey indicated that only one parent in five (21%) said he belonged to a community organization. Except for the Home and School Association -- to which seven percent claimed to belong -- no single organization was mentioned by more than three percent of the parents mentioned. The Overbrook Civic Association and the Haddington Leadership Organization were each mentioned by three percent. The remaining parents mentioned membership in no less than 23 specific organizations, and miscellaneous unspecified block clubs, civic, and religious groups.

The organization which the parents felt would best represent them in dealing with the people operating the schools was found to be the Home and School Association for one parent in ten (11%). Here again, no single organization was mentioned by more than three precent, and as many as 73 percent of the parents did not, or could not, name any organization. The replies from the remaining parents surveyed mentioned no less than 26 specific organizations and other miscellaneous unidentified block clubs, committees, and organizations, as well as the local and neighborhood press. (See Table 51 and 52).

Table 51. "Are you a member in any community organizations now? Which?"

	Total Surveyed
	(751)
Home and School Association	7%
Haddington Leadership Organization	3
Overbrook Civic Association	3
Block organization (unspecified)	2
Religious group (unspecified)	2
Wynnefield Residents Association	1
Boy, Girl Scouts	1
Civic organizations (unspecified)	1
Other organizations [a/]	5
None	79

[a/] Community organizations mentioned by less than one-half of one percent each included: Alden Street Block Club, American Jewish Congress, Belmont Council, Callowhill Block Club, Catholic Community Relations Council, Civil Defense Organization, Connestoga Committee, Opportunities Industrialization Center, Otter Street Block Club, Overbrook Park Community Council, Robinson Street Block Club, 62nd Street Block Club, West Mill Creek Betterment Council, West Park Civic Association, West Philadelphia Community Organization, Wynnefield-Balwynne Parks Civic Association, Wynnefield Committee, Young Men's Christian Association, and Young Great Society.

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because some gave more than one answer.

Table 52. "What organizations around here would represent you best in dealing with the people who operate the schools around here?"

	Total Surveyed
	(751)
Home and School Association	11%
Overbrook Civic Association	3
Haddington Leadership Organization	2
Religious group (unspecified)	2
Wynnefield Residents Association	2
Other Neighborhood Improvement Organizations, Block Clubs[a]	2
National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)	1
Boy, Girl Scouts	1
Young Great Society	1
Local Press	1
Block Clubs (unspecified)	1
Civic Organizations (unspecified)	1
Other organizations[b]	4
Don't know, none	73

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[a] Includes Belmont Council, Connestoga Community Association, Mantua Civic Association, Mantua Avenue Committee, Mantua Project, Ogden Civic Association, Opportunities Industrialization Center, Otter Street Block Club, Parkside Civic Association, Residents Association, West Mill Creek Betterment Council, Wynnefield Committee, and the Wynnefield-Balwynne Parks Civic Association.

[b] Includes City Hall, Civic Club at Raymond Rosen, Congress of Racial Equality, 44th Ward, Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Urban League, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Welfare, West Philadelphia Progressors, and the Young Men's Christian Associates.

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because some gave more than one answer.

CHAPTER TEN

A TECHNICAL NOTE

In addition to those questions reported in detail in this report, the interview schedule contained several items which were not discussed here because of (1) the lack of conclusive information in replies to one question, and (2) the use of certain other information primarily as technical data about the interviewing situation.

Inconclusive Replies

In many surveys of the type presented here, a question is asked at the conclusion of the interview to provide respondents with an opportunity to mention anything else relevant to the general topics which the respondent may feel he did not have an opportunity to cover. Such a question was included in this survey:

> "Is there any comment you would like to make about the schools -- either a criticism, or a suggestion to make, or a general comment -- that was not brought out in our conversation?"

Over half (56%) of the parents surveyed had nothing to add; of the remaining replies, no single type of response was elicited by more than 2.5 percent of those surveyed. The responses covered such a wide range of responses, each reported by only small numbers of parents, that the details are omitted here. The responses did not point to any conclusive, persistent feeling that had not been expressed earlier in the questionnaire. When a response to this question provided additional information about an earlier item in the questionnaire, it was coded and reported in the earlier relevant section.

Technical Data About Interviewing

Standard procedure in interviews is an assessment by the interviewer of the general interviewing situation. This information is secured to learn as much about the interviewer as about the dialogue between the interviewer and the respondent. The interviewers were asked to rate whether the respondent was very, somewhat, or not cooperative; the respective percentages were 87, 10, and one, with an additional two percent not reporting. Interviewers were also asked to rate the respondent's understanding of the questions, with the following results: good, 68 percent; fair, 25 percent; and poor, four percent; with an additional three percent of the interviewers not reporting.

Interviewers also reported upon the persons present during the interview, in addition to the respondent. There were no others present in 60 percent of the interviews, and the persons present in the remaining interviews were as follows: respondent's spouse, nine percent; respondent's parent, eight percent; the student about whom some of the questions pertained, 14 percent; and another child, relative, or friend, 16 percent. Tests of the responses between those interviews conducted with and without the student present indicated no statistically significant difference.

Finally, the interviewer asked the respondent, at the conclusion of the interview, whether or not he had been interviewed at home before "like this." The overwhelming majority (93%) said they had not been so interviewed. Of the remaining seven percent, some (2%) said their child's teacher or the school principal had spoken to them about some of the matters discussed in the interview, and the rest had been interviewed in their homes by commercial and political pollsters (2%), social case workers (1%), academicians (1%), and others (1%).

APPENDIX A - Letter Mailed to All Parents of Public School Children Selected in Sample.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA
Office of Research and Evaluation

The Overbrook Cluster Parent Survey
1701 North Robinson Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19151
Tel: GR 7-0771

November, 1968

Dear Parent:

The Division of Administrative and Survey Research of the School District of Philadelphia, in cooperation with the Overbrook Cluster Committee and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, is conducting a survey of parents in the Overbrook-Wynnefield Area. The purpose of this survey is to find out how people like yourself feel about the schools. This study will be based on voluntary personal interviews with parents or guardians of school children selected at random.

The name of your child is one of those selected, no one at his or her school knows that his or her name has been selected. Very shortly an interviewer from our survey team, showing proper identification, will call at your address for an interview. Our interviewer can tell you more about the study at that time. You can be sure that what you will say will be entirely confidential. None of your answers will ever be identified with you or your child.

We hope you will find the interview interesting and worthwhile. Your opinions and feelings will be of great importance for the development of the schools in the community.

Sincerely yours,

Daniel R. Fascione
Assistant Director for
Administrative and Survey Research

Division of Administrative and Survey Research
DRF:fek

APPENDIX B - Questionnaire

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA
Office of Research and Evaluation

THE OVERBROOK CLUSTER PARENT SURVEY

FOR OFFICE
USE ONLY

1- Interviewer's Name________________

2- Interview No.____________________
(office designation)

3-
4-
5-
6-

Name of Student__________________________________

7- Address of Student______________________________
8-
9- Census Tract____________________
10-
11-
12- School Where Student Enrolled (1967-68)________
13-

14- Grade Level (1967-68)___________________________
15-

DESIGNATED

IN

OFFICE

Visit Record

	1st	2nd	3rd
Day			
Hour			
Result*			

*Indicate the results of each contact by means of the following code:

1. Respondent participated
2. No one home/respondent not home
3. Vacant house
4. Not a dwelling
5. Family moved; new address______________________________
6. Refusal
7. Wrong address; family never lived there, correct address
____
8. Other reason interview not completed (explain)

____

____

____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

(ALL INSTRUCTIONS TO INTERVIEWERS IN CAPITAL LETTERS ONLY!!!!)
(IF STUDENT NO LONGER ATTENDS SCHOOL, USE PAST TENSE IN QUESTIONS REFERRING TO STUDENT)

CARD I

Good (morning/afternoon/evening). I'm (YOUR NAME), an interviewer for the Overbrook Cluster Parent Survey.

Perhaps you remember receiving this letter (SHOW COPY OF LETTER MAILED IN ADVANCE) describing the survey.

May I come in and talk to the person who takes care of (STUDENT NAMED ON FRONT PAGE).

(EXPLAIN TO RESPONDENT THE PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY:
(1) TO GIVE PARENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE SCHOOLS.
(2) TO HAVE THEIR EXPERIENCES USED IN CONSIDERING IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SCHOOLS, AND
(3) TO GREATER INVOLVE PARENTS IN SCHOOL AFFAIRS).

(EMPHASIZE CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION)
RECORD TIME NOW

______________am________________pm

(UNLESS VOLUNTEERED, ASK):

1. By the way, how are you related to (STUDENT)?

16-1 ______Mother
-2 ______Father
-3 ______Brother or Sister
-4 ______Grandparent
-5 ______Aunt or Uncle
-6 ______Other Relative
-7 ______Friend
-8 ______Other
-0 ______No Response

17- 2. What school is (STUDENT) attending now?______________________________
18-
19-

20- 3. And what grade is (STUDENT) attending now?___________________________
21-

22- 4. Are there any other children here attending the public schools?______
How many?____________________

5. How does (STUDENT) go to school?
(MORE THAN ONE ANSWER POSSIBLE)

23- ______Walks
24- ______Paid public transportation (SEPTA bus, trolley, el)
25- ______School bus
26- ______Driven by parent
27- ______Other (specify)

FOR OFFICE
USE ONLY

CARD I

6. I'd like to get some of your feelings now about the (SCHOOL) As far as you know, would you say that (SCHOOL) provides its students with enough or not enough. . . (SHOW CARD LISTING ITEMS BELOW AND READ OFF EACH ITEM TO RESPONDENT)

		Schools Enough	Provide Not Enough	Don't Know or No Response
28-	a. Books in class			
29-	b. Books to take home			
30-	c. Books that deal with things the student is interested in			
31-	d. Crossing guards			
32-	e. Lunchroom facilities			
33-	f. Other (specify)			
34-				

(INTERVIEWER'S NOTE: FOR QUESTION 6f, ASK: What (other) facilities are needed at (SCHOOL)?

7. Does (SCHOOL) have a regular room where (STUDENT) can have (his/her) lunch, or not?

35-1 ______School has regular room for student's lunch
-2 ______School has no regular room for student's lunch
-3 ______Respondent uncertain
-0 ______No Response

8. Where does (STUDENT) usually have lunch during school days? (PRE-CODED OPEN QUESTION)

36-1 ______School lunchroom
-2 ______Elsewhere in school building
-3 ______Commercial restaurant/store near school
-4 ______Home
-5 ______Respondent uncertain
-6 ______Other (specify)
-0

9. About how many students would you say are in (STUDENTS) class (IF ELEMENTARY)/average class (IF SECONDARY)?

37- ______Students (IF DON'T KNOW, SKIP TO QUESTION 11)

10. And would you say this number is too large, too small, or about right?

38-1 ______Too large
-2 ______Too small
-3 ______About right
-4 ______Respondent uncertain
-0 ______No response

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

CARD 1 — 11. And would you say that (SCHOOL) has too many children or not?

39-1 ______Too many
-2 ______Not too many
-3 ______Don't know

12. And as far as you are concerned, have the schools taught (STUDENT) enough or not enough about . . . (SHOW CARD LISTING ITEMS BELOW. READ AND RECORD RESPONSES TO EACH ITEM)

	Q. 12. e,g,: Don't Ask Parents of Elementary Children	Enough	Not Enough	Too Much (Volun.)	Don't Know/ No Opinion
40-	a. Reading and writing				
41-	b. Mathematics and science				
42-	c. Music and art				
43-	d. Getting along with others				
44-	e. People's legal rights				
45-	f. African and Afro-American history				
46-	g. How to find a good job				
47-	h. Right from wrong				

48- 13. What other things do you think should be taught in school which are not taught, or not taught enough, now?

49-
50-
51-

52- 14. Are there any things now taught in school you feel should not be taught there?

53-
54-
55-

15. How would you yourself rate (STUDENT'S) general ability. Would you say it is average, above average, or below average?

56-1 ______Above average
-2 ______Average
-3 ______Below average
-0 ______No response, uncertain

FOR OFFICE
USE ONLY

CARD 1 16. Would you say (STUDENT) reads as well as a child (his/her) age should read?

57-1 ______Yes (GO TO QUESTION 17)
-2 ______No; why not
58-

17. And is (STUDENT'S) handwriting (IF ELEMENTARY)/writing composition (IF SECONDARY); as good as it should be for a child (his/her)age?

59-1 ______Yes (GO TO QUESTION 18)
-2 ______No; why not
60-

61- 18. And what about (his/her) arithmetic. Does (STUDENT) do arithmetic as well as a child (his/her) age should?

62-1 ______Yes (GO TO QUESTION 19)
-2 ______No; why not
63-
64-

65- 19. Generally speaking, when a student is not reading or performing in school to the best of his ability, what would you say is the reason for this?
(UNLESS VOLUNTEERED, PROBE WITH REGARD TO THE STUDENT, TEACHER, PRINCIPAL, SCHOOL SYSTEM, CURRICULUM, PARENTS, OTHER REASONS)

66-
67-
68-

20. Do you happen to know whether your child took any standardized tests in school; like the IQ tests or the Iowa tests?

69-1 _______Yes (GO TO QUESTION 21)
-2 _______No (SKIP TO QUESTION 22)
-3 _______Don't know (SKIP TO QUESTION 22)

21. (IF YES TO 21): Would you say (STUDENT) performed on these tests as well as a child (his/her) age should perform?

70-1 _______Yes
-2 _______No
-3 _______Don't know

22. Do you think a child's performance on these tests affects what the teachers expect of him?

71-1 _______Yes (GO TO QUESTION 23)
-2 _______No (SKIP TO QUESTION 24)
-3 _______Don't know, No opinion (SKIP TO QUESTION 24)

72- 23. (IF YES TO 22): In what way are the teacher's expectations of the student affected by test scores? (ALLOW RESPONDENT TIME TO VOLUNTEER COMPLETE ANSWER. UNLESS VOLUNTEERED, PROBE FOR EFFECT OF THE TEST SCORES UPON TEACHER'S MOTIVATING OR ENCOURAGING STUDENTS)

73-
74-
75-

FOR OFFICE
USE ONLY

CARD I — 24. Suppose an elementary student was reading below the level for his grade, is it better for the student to be promoted to the next highest grade, or should the student repeat the grade?

76-1 ______Student should be promoted (no conditions mentioned)
-2 ______Student should repeat grade (no conditions mentioned)
77- ______Student should be promoted, but dependent on the following conditions:
78- ______Student should repeat grade, but dependent on the following conditions:

______Other qualified answer______________________________
______Uncertain, no response

80-1

CARD II
Columns 1-15
same as CARD I

16- 25. How many years has (STUDENT) been in Philadelphia public schools?______________________
(IF THREE OR MORE YEARS, ASK QUESTION 25a)
(IF TWO OR LESS YEARS, GO TO QUESTION 26)

25a. Looking back over (STUDENT'S) years in the Philadelphia public schools, would you say the schools have generally helped (him/her) to develop (his/her) ability, or not?

17-1 ______School have helped develop students' abilities (GO TO QUESTION 26).
-2 ______Schools have not helped develop students' abilities (GO TO QUESTION 25b).
-3 ______Qualified answer__________(GO TO QUESTION 26).
-0 ______Uncertain, no response (GO TO QUESTION 26).

18-
19- 25b. (IF ANSWERED: SCHOOL DID NOT HELP CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT In what way would you say the schools did not help (his/her development?
20-
21-

26. All things considered, did you expect (STUDENT) to get more out of (SCHOOL) than (he/she) has gotten so far, or has (he/she) gotten out of (SCHOOL) about what you expected?

22-1 ______Student was expected to get more out of school (GO TO QUESTION 26a).
-2 ______Student got as much as expected out of school (GO TO QUESTION 27)
-3 ______Student was expected to get less out of school (volunteered) (GO TO QUESTION 27).
-4 ______Parent uncertain, did not know what to expect (GO TO QUESTION 27)
-0 ______No response

FOR OFFICE
USE ONLY
CARD II

23- 26a. (IF STUDENT WAS EXPECTED TO GET MORE OUT OF SCHOOL): In what way should (STUDENT) have gotten more out of school?

24-
25-
26-

27- 27. One thing that many parents are concerned about is discipline in the schools. How do you feel about this?
(UNLESS VOLUNTEERED, ASK WHETHER TEACHERS SHOULD USE MORE OR LESS DISCIPLINE, AND IN WHAT WAY SHOULD DISCIPLINE EITHER BE INCREASED OR DECREASED. PROBE FOR SPECIFIC FORMS OF DISCIPLINE APPROVED AND NOT APPROVED).

28-
29-
30-
31-
32-
33-
34-

28. In addition to regular teachers, each school employs other people to help run the school. As far as you know, does (SCHOOL) have enough or not enough teachers whose special job is to improve the children's reading?

35-1 ______Enough teachers to help teach reading.
-2 ______Not enough teachers to help teach reading.
-3 ______Don't know or no response.

29. Are there enough or not enough personnel in (SCHOOL) to properly supervise the students?

36-1 ______Enough
-2 ______Not enough
-3 ______Qualified
-0 ______Don't know

30. Did you ever happen to hear of non-teaching assistants, or NTA's, in the schools?

37-1 ______Yes, have heard of NTA's (GO TO QUESTION 30a, & 30b).
-2 ______No, have not heard of NTA's (GO TO QUESTION 31)
-3 ______Don't know, or no response (GO TO QUESTION 31)

(IF RESPONDENT HAS HEARD OF NTA'S)

38- 30a. As far as you know, what do the NTA's do in school?
39-
40-
41-
42- 30b. About how many NTA's are at (SCHOOL)?

31. Speaking now about school counselors, would you say (STUDENT'S) school has enough or not enough counselors?

43-1 ______Enough
-2 ______Not enough
-3 ______Don't know or no answer

FOR OFFICE
USE ONLY
CARD II

44- 32. As far as you know, what do the counselors actually do at (SCHOOL)?
45-
46-
47-

33. During the past year did (STUDENT) ever feel discriminated against in school for any reason, or not?

48-1 ______Yes (GO TO QUESTION 33a).
-2 ______No (SKIP TO QUESTION 34).
-3 ______Don't know (SKIP TO QUESTION 34)

49- 33a. Can you tell me something about this discrimination?
50- (UNLESS VOLUNTEERED, PROBE FOR SOURCE AND FORM OF
51- DISCRIMINATION: RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM)
52-
53-
54-

34. And thinking now about yourself, have you ever felt any form of discrimination against you from the schools for any reason, or not?

55-1 ______Yes (GO TO QUESTION 34a).
-2 ______No (SKIP TO QUESTION 35).
-3 ______Don't know, or no answer (SKIP TO QUESTION 35)

56- 34a. Can you tell me something about this discrimination?
57- (UNLESS VOLUNTEERED, PROBE FOR SOURCE AND FORM OF
58- DISCRIMINATION: RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM)
59-
60-
61-

35. Did you ever happen to visit (SCHOOL) during school hours?

62-1 ______Yes (GO TO QUESTION 35a).
-2 ______No (SKIP TO QUESTION 36).
-3 ______No response (SKIP TO QUESTION 36)

63- 35a. What was your reaction to the school?
64- (UNLESS VOLUNTEERED, PROBE FOR GENERAL IMPRESSION OF
65- SCHOOL, TEACHER, DISCIPLINE, ORDER, SAFETY)
66-
75-
76-
77-
78-
79-
80-2

FOR OFFICE
USE ONLY
CARD III

Columns 1-15
same as Card I

36. Have you ever wanted to talk to someone at the schools -- to complain about somethin, or make a suggestion, or discuss your child's performance, but for some reason didn't?

16-1 ______No, have never wanted to talk with school personnel. (SKIP TO QUESTION 37)
-2 ______Yes, wanted to talk with school personnel but did not? (GO TO QUESTION 36a).
-3 ______Yes, wanted to talk with school personnel and did. (SKIP TO QUESTION 37).
-4 ______No response (SKIP TO QUESTION 37).

17-
18-
19-
20-

36a. Why didn't you talk with the people at the school?

37. During the past year, did you ever have a chance to talk with (STUDENT'S teacher(s)?

21-1 ______Yes, spoke with teacher(s) (GO TO QUESTION 37).
-2 ______No, did not speak with teacher(s) (SKIP TO QUESTION 38)
-3 ______Not applicable, child not in schools before (SKIP TO QUESTION 38).
-4 ______No response (GO TO QUESTION 38).

37a. Did the teacher come to you first, or did you go to (him/her) first?

22-1 ______Teacher initiated meeting
-2 ______Parent initiated meeting
-3 ______Neither initiated, met simultaneous, qualified answer
-4 ______Don't know, no response

23-
24-
25-
26-

37b. What did you talk to the teacher about?

37c. Did you find the teacher generally helpful or not?

27-1 ______Helpful
-2 ______Not Helpful
-3 ______Qualified answer
-4 ______Don't know, or no response

FOR OFFICE
USE ONLY
CARD III

28- 29- 30- 31- 32- 33- 34-

38. Suppose you wanted to meed privately with (STUDENT'S) teacher after school hours, what days of the week would be most convenient for you to meet the teacher? (FOR EACH DAY MENTIONED) What time during (DAY) would be best for you?

Day	Time

39. As far as you know, were there any meetings of parents at (SCHOOL) last year? (Examples: PTA, Home and School Association, Open House, etc.)

35-1 ______Yes (GO TO QUESTION 39a).
-2 ______No (SKIP TO QUESTION 40)
-3 ______No response (SKIP TO QUESTION 40)

36- 37- 38- 39- 40- 41-

39a. Did you happen to attend any of these meetings?
______Yes; how many; what was your reaction to (it/them)?

______No;do you happen to remember why you didn't attend?

______No response

40. Does (SCHOOL) have a Home and School Association, or some type of parent's group?

42-1 ______Yes (GO TO QUESTION 40a).
-2 ______No (SKIP TO QUESTION 41).
-3 ______No response (SKIP TO QUESTION 41).

43- 44- 45- 46- 47- 48-

40a. Did you happen to attend any meetings of this group?

______Yes; how many; what was your reaction to (it/them)?

______No; do you happen to remember why you didn't attend?

______No response

FOR OFFICE
USE ONLY
CARD III

41. As you may know, the schools for the entire city of Philadelphia are now legally administered by a School Board, whose members are selected by the Mayor. The School Board now makes decisions which affect the schools of the City.

Now, some people have suggested school committees for various parts of the City made up of parents and other adults who live in those parts of the City. These people would help make decisions about the schools in their own community.

When you think about it, would these school committees be a good idea or not a good idea?

49- ______Good idea; what makes you feel that way?
50-

51- (ASK 41a AFTER RESPONSE)
52- ______Bad idea; what makes you feel that way?

53-
54- (SKIP TO QUESTION 42)

55- ______No response (SKIP TO QUESTION 42)
56- ______Qualified answer (describe) (ASK 41a IF APPLICABLE)

41a. What kinds of decisions should this committee help to make?

57-
58-
59-
60-
61-
62-
63-
64-

75-
76-
77-
78-
79-
80-3

CARD IV
Columns 1-15
same as
CARD I

42. Did you happen to hear about a new school district for this community?

16-1 ______Yes, heard of new district (GO TO QUESTION 42a).
-2 ______No, have not heard about new district (SKIP TO QUESTION 43)
-3 ______Don't know, or no response (SKIP TO QUESTION 43)

FOR OFFICE
USE ONLY
CARD IV

17- 42a. By chance do you know who the new District Superintendent is? What's his name?

18- 19- 20- 21- 42b. And do you believe the new district will be any different than the one before? In what way?

22- 23- 24- 25- 43. When you really think about it, what organization around here would represent you best in dealing with the people who operate the schools around here?

26- 27- 28- 29- 44. When you want to talk to someone around here about the schools, who do you generally talk to? (UNLESS VOLUNTEERED, PROBE FOR PERSON'S ROLE IN COMMUNITY, RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SCHOOLS, OR ANOTHER MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY IF ANY).

30- 31- 32- 33- 45. Are you a member of any community organizations now? ___________
Which organizations?___________________________________

46. During the next year, do you think (SCHOOL) will become better, become worse, or remain about the same?

34-1 ______Become better
-2 ______Become worse
-3 ______Remain about the same

47. When (STUDENT) is in school, do you usually feel (he/she) will be safe, or do you usually feel (he/she) may get hurt?

35-1 ______Safe (SKIP TO QUESTION 48)
-2 ______Get hurt (GO TO QUESTION 47a and 47b)
-3 ______Qualified answer (describe) (GO TO QUESTION 48)
-4 ______Don't know, or no answer (GO TO QUESTION 48)

36- 37- 38- 39- 47a. Can you tell me why you feel this way? (UNLESS VOLUNTEERED, PROBE FOR RELATION OF PROVOCATORS TO STUDENT, NUMBERS, TYPE OF VIOLENCE, ACTION IF ANY TAKEN TO PREVENT VIOLENCE).

40- 41- 42- 43- 47b. What can the school administration do to make the (SCHOOL) safer for (STUDENT)?

FOR OFFICE
USE ONLY
CARD IV

44-
45-

48. Just one more thing before I go. Is there any comment you would like to make about the school--either a criticism, or a suggestion to make, or a general comment--that was not brought out in our conversation?

46-
47-

49. By the way, have you ever been interviewed at home like this before? (IF YES): Do you happen to recall what the interview was about?

(THANK RESPONDENT FOR HELP AND TIME)

May I have your telephone number in case my office wants to VERIFY THIS INTERVIEW?

Telephone number ______________________________

Note time now: ______________________________

FOR OFFICE
USE ONLY
CARD IV

DO NOT ASK RESPONDENT

FILL IN ITEMS BELOW IMMEDIATELY AFTER LEAVING RESPONDENT

48- A. Total length of interview:____________________minutes

B. Cooperativeness of respondent:

48-1 ______Very cooperative
-2 ______Somewhat cooperative
-3 ______Not cooperative

C. Respondent's understanding of questions:

50-1 ______Good understanding
-2 ______Fair understanding
-3 ______Poor understanding

D. What person over 14 years of age were present during interview? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

51- ______None
52- ______Spouse
53- ______Parent
54- ______Student referred to in the questionnaire
55- ______Other relative or friend
56- ______Other (specify)

57- E. Date of interview______________________

58-

59- F. Interviewer's signature________________________________

Please give here a brief description of the respondent, and of any special conditions that might have affected the interview.

75-
76-
77-
78-
79-
80-4

Division of Administrative and Survey Research
September 3, 1968; First revision October 4, 1968 for Pre-test; Second Revision November 7, 1968 for full survey.
JS:fek

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

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DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND SURVEY RESEARCH

OFFICE OF RESEARCH
AND EVALUATION
THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA